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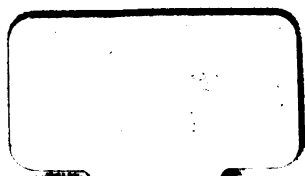
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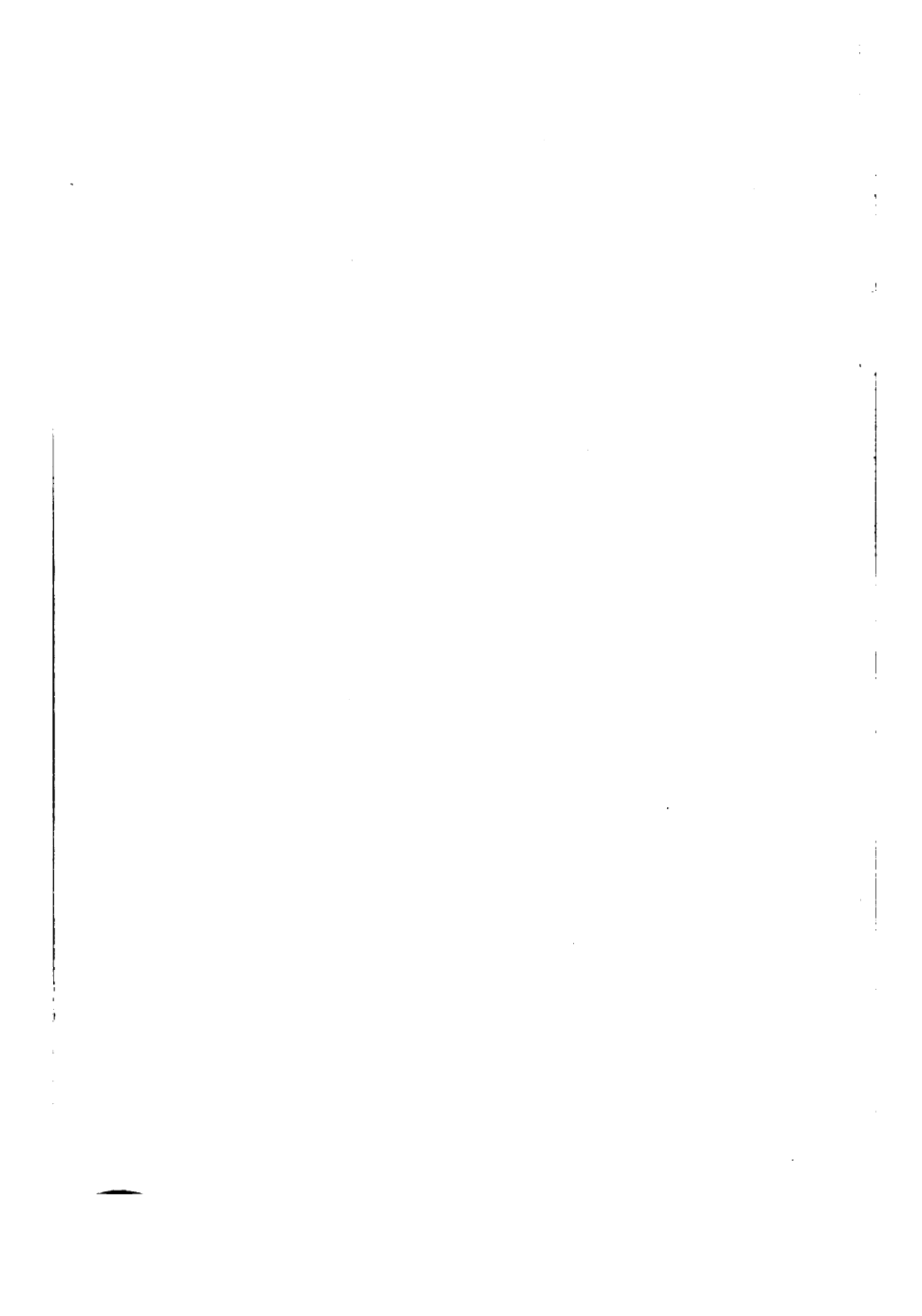


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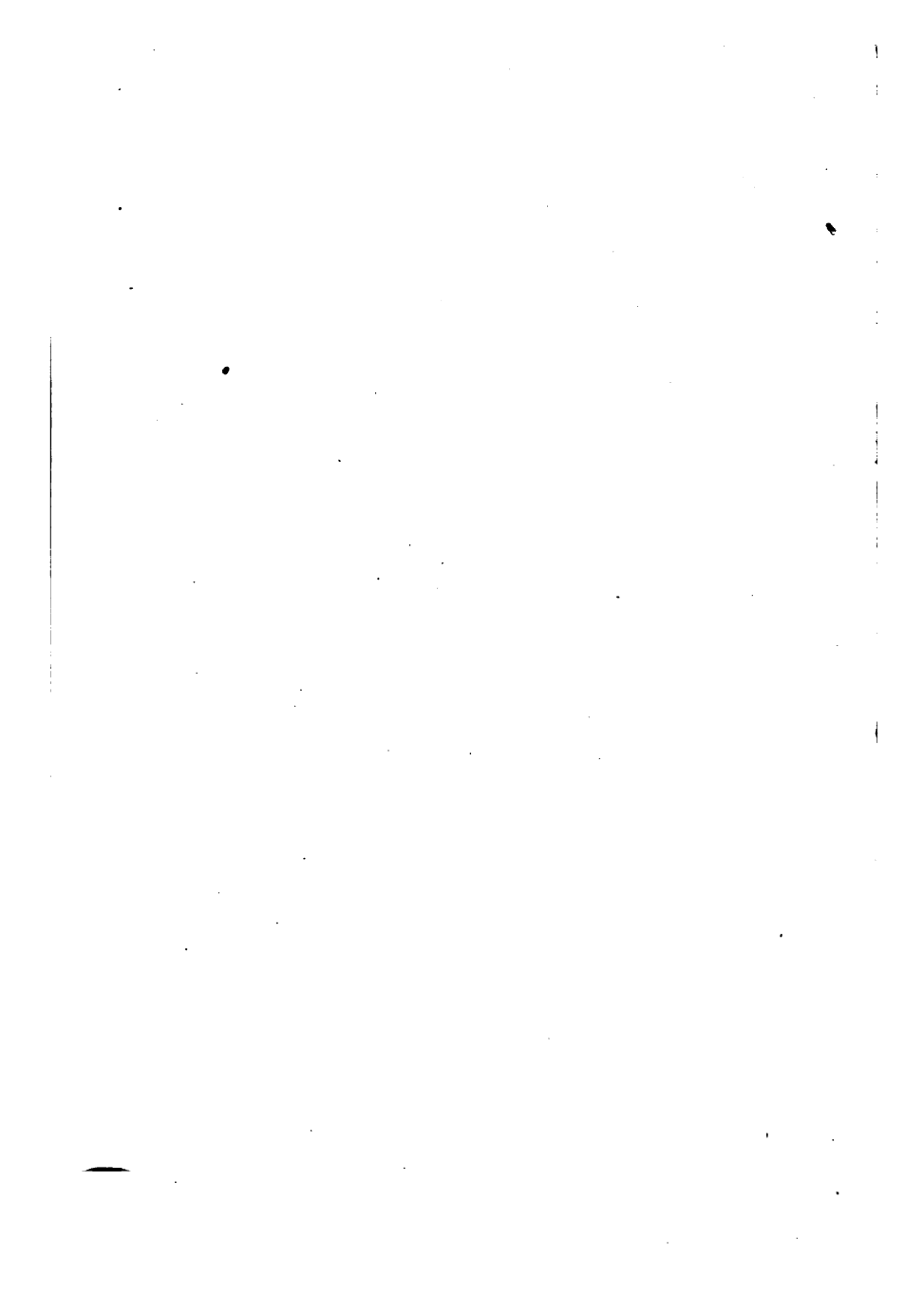
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I went out and gathered up the various articles. - p. 37.

# ALADDIN THE SECOND

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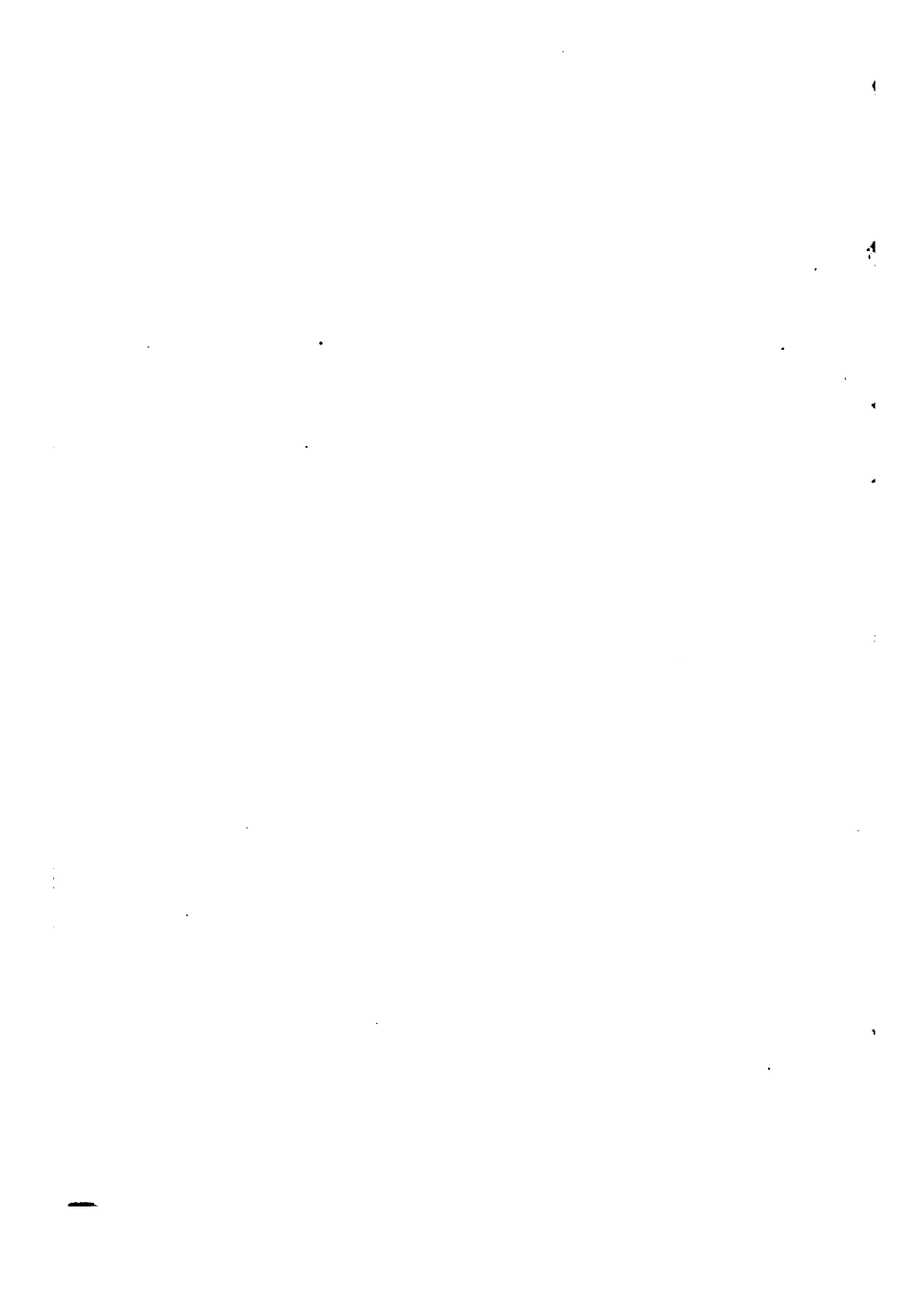
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# ALADDIN THE SECOND

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# ALADDIN THE SECOND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ALADDIN IN POVERTY.

I DEEM it my duty, as a successful business man, to put it within the power of every boy to know just how I rose to my present greatness. There is no doubt but that every boy will want to know. He should at least.

But he must not blindly follow me in every detail of my experience. In that case he would fail miserably. Do not look toward my particular profession. It is over-crowded. There is but a limited demand for new blood in that line. Besides, we do not care for any more competition. I reached eminence through exceptional advantages which every one cannot hope to enjoy. But the skill shown in adapting casual means to some tangible good end, the fore-

sight, the ability, the tact displayed in my career, will be worthy of study. I take it that a boy in the position I was as a boy (and there are many of them) will be grateful for any information which will assist him in getting out of it. It has been said that there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. It requires sagacity to discover when this flood takes place. In my case, I discovered it, it is true, by accident. That it was discovered at all, and how, are matters of interest, because so many thousands are trying to do the same thing, in most cases unsuccessfully.

I was early left an orphan, a half orphan, my father dying when I was about six years old. He was by profession a tailor. Not a workman, understand me, but a merchant tailor, in business for himself. He had a run of fashionable custom which my mother undertook to keep up for a while. She failed because she lacked capital and undertook to cut and fit herself. This she did according to dressmaking methods, which did not succeed. Tailor-made dresses may be all right, but dressmaker-made gentlemen's garments were an abomination. She finally took in sewing on the sly. We kept up appearances and she educated me, as much as I could be educated without too much trouble to myself. We managed





to keep our old house and were considered very respectable. I was content to have her support me as long as I could persuade her to. It gave me more time for other things.

I did not like to work. The fact is I was born tired. It was a thing I could not help. Besides, I was waiting for something to turn up. Subsequent events proved that it was not in vain, that something did turn up, of which I took advantage. It all goes to show that parents should not drive their children to industry unmercifully. If the boys and girls are only let alone, ten to one they will all turn out right in the end, and will the sooner find the work best suited to their abilities. That was my experience. I met obstacles, but I conquered them.

When I reached the proper age, when most boys without fathers are compelled to assist their mothers, I was allowed to do as I pleased. To-day I am rolling in wealth, and my mother,—well, mother lived long enough to see me well on in the right road. She knows now that my way was the correct one.

While I was at school and preparing for college, every one said that I should be at work earning money to help mother. Somehow I never could make up my mind to do so. Any one can see now that it was all for the best. If we could regulate matters in this

world, we would make a mess of it sure. Fortunately Providence regulates most things for us.

As a boy, when I had a little extra money, which mother skimmed herself to let me have so that I should not be entirely without, I liked nothing better than to play a little "poker" for pennies, with the fellows. There was an enjoyable uncertainty about this game that was exciting. Sometimes I would make a little money in that way, and if I did not, I could usually get mother to let me have some more after a while; so you see I was in pocket either way. That was not very uncertain, but enough so for me. The only reason that I did not entirely approve of poker was because it required some skill; and, if kept up too long, was rather too much like hard work. I preferred to stake money on dice or even matching pennies, but the fellows would insist on poker. I used to enjoy lotteries and prizes at church fairs. It was this liking that accidentally led up to the greatest opportunity of my life, as well as directed my attention to an occupation which afterwards was found to suit me exactly.

Every great railway in the course of time accumulates a quantity of unclaimed baggage at every large passenger station. It is a matter for conjecture how so many people manage to lose their baggage and make no inquiry for it. Some of it is baggage that

has gone astray, through mistake, so far, that it baffles tracing under the best methods. Some is worthless stuff that accumulates storage charges until they are more than the baggage is worth. Some of it has belonged to people who have met with accidents, some to very forgetful people who have forgotten it until too late, some to people who have been called away suddenly and have been unable to return.

In several states, after a certain length of time, the law allows the company to sell this unclaimed baggage in a certain way, usually providing that it shall be advertised, sold at public sale, and sold unopened.

These sales were held regularly in our city, and they were just "nuts" to me. I did not always have money to invest, but I liked to be on hand and watch. There was the element of chance to attract. Some elegantly finished trunk would promise well and be run up to a good price. After it was sold it would be broken open by the purchaser at once on the premises, and be found to contain nothing of value, at the most a few worn-out garments or shoes. At another time, some very shabby affair, hardly holding together, would go for a trifle, and when opened would be found to contain something which could be sold for at least ten times what was paid for it.

One of these sales was advertised one day, and I attended it as usual. I remember that I had just two dollars in my pocket. I had received it that day from mother.

I went to a private day-school. Mother did not think a public school would fit me as well for the high and honorable career she had laid out for me; and by hard work, which was very praiseworthy in her, she managed to scrape together enough to afford the more expensive method. We had not only to pay tuition, but buy my books. Whenever a new book was needed, I reported that fact promptly at home. The money was usually forthcoming. I always ascertained the retail price of the book, to report to her. After I got the money, it was often possible to find one second-hand at less price, either at the shops or in the hands of some older student. The difference was my perquisite, of course. The two dollars had been given me for a book. I felt certain that the book could be had for one dollar, so I had one dollar that I could count on for my own use.

There was a funny little chest to be sold with the unclaimed baggage. It was something like a better class of tea-chest, one of the kind that has a hinged lid, and a peculiar brass hasp on the front. It had once been lacquered, but was now very shabby. It

was longer than an ordinary tea-chest, but not so high. It took my eye from the first, though no one else appeared to pay much attention to it. This was in the nature of a providential leading. As I had some spare money, I thought I would bid on it and try my luck. Such packages often sold as low as twenty-five cents. From five to seven dollars was the highest for the most promising parcels.

There were some marks on the chest, on a damaged and faded red label, which looked like Chinese characters. There was a Chinese laundryman in the crowd, and I took him over to examine them. I gave him ten cents out of my two dollars for his trouble. After he got the money he said,

"Hong Kong. That's what it says. Some poor John. Lostee baggage. Worth not nickel. Hong Kong John all poor. No good. Coolie many. Canton, rich Chinaman, merchant, blue cap, gold button. Baggage not from Canton."

I asked John if the chest was probably worth ten cents.

"Not nickel," he said.

"Well, then, give me back the money," I demanded.

"No. Advice worth more than Hong Kong chest. You no buyee. Keep money. Heap worth more. I save you lossee. That's worth ten cents."

I saw the force of his reasoning. If I had been in his place I should have thought as he did.

I thought that the thing might be worth a trial anyhow—it had taken my fancy—so I waited.

It was somewhat of a surprise when the box was put up to find that the first bid was fifty cents. That was unusual at these sales. The bidder must want it badly. He must be unused to bidding. I looked to see who had made the offer. To my surprise I found that it was my ten-cent friend, the Chinaman.

## CHAPTER II.

### *A WORTHLESS BARGAIN.*

HERE was some mystery. For a man to say a thing was not worth a nickel and then to bid fifty cents on it, seemed to argue that he had been lying. It inferred that, in his superior judgment in matters relating to Hong Kong, there might be something of value in the little battered chest. If of value to him, why not to me? I immediately raised the bid to one dollar, all my available pile. It had been my practice at poker, if a thing was to be done to do it at once, in a way to bluff off and dishearten opponents. My usual practice did not work to advantage in this case. John bid higher. Without stopping to think how I was to make up the deficiency, I at once bid higher still, out of the book-reserve money. The bidding continued spiritedly, first by ten-cent bids, then by fives. I was afraid that my pile would be exhausted before my opponent gave in, and undoubt-

edly looked quite anxious. This interested the bystanders, none of whom appeared to want the chest. They did not like to see a young interested American downed by a stolid Chinaman, so they all hoped I would win.

I was under the impression that I had two dollars in my possession, forgetting that I had given John ten cents. My last bid was two dollars, at which I would have to stop. The Chinaman's pile must have run out at the same time that mine did, for he let me have it. Just as it was handed down, I remembered.

"Golly," I said aloud, "I've only got one ninety. I forgot."

"Here, chappie," said a man alongside of me, who had been urging me on, "here's ten cents. Don't let the Chinaman get it." So I took the offer.

The chest came to me, and I opened it after some trouble. The Chinaman came over to see what I got.

He laughed when he saw, for there was apparently nothing but paper, rice paper such as comes from China, all colors, rumbled up and thrown in as if only for packing or to fill up; great wads of it, and little pieces, a regular waste-paper basket.

My impression, as I dumped it out on the floor,



was that there was something packed in the paper, though I had been unable to find anything. I set to work and opened each piece of paper separately, pressing it out flat and laying it back in the chest. I had not gone far when I came to one big wad which when opened had a similar wad inside of it. Inside of that was another. There was something in that sure. Whatever it was must be very light, judging from the way it felt. I persevered, and soon found that my surmises were correct. When the last wrapper in that package had been removed, it disclosed a piece of very light thin metal ware, of bronze apparently. It was of very dark color, plain, and to all appearances an article such as we frequently used at table, only ours were made of ordinary table dish ware. It was an oblong, low, open dish, with a handle at one end, and a spout at the other. We usually called such a thing "a gravy boat." It was a convenient shape for pouring.

"What is it, John?" I asked the Chinaman.

"Canton bronze, but no good, thin. Like old, but new," said John.

"How much will you give for it, John?"

"Five cent for paper, five cent for bronze."

I declined the offer on the spot. As old metal I thought I could do better, though his remark rather

discouraged me in the idea that I might get my book money back. I saw no way out of that difficulty except to do without study in the department affected, under various excuses, until I could make a raise from mother on the plea that still another book was needed. I was used to inventing such excuses, though I did not like to. It was too much trouble and made one think and worry too much.

"What do you use it for, John?" I asked,— "to hold gravy?"

"Soupee," said he. "To pour in cup like thee."

"Oh," I said, after which the conversation lagged and everybody attended to sale again.

I concluded to leave the chest and paper, taking one piece of the latter to wrap the bronze in, but to take that with me. I was badly sold, but I had often been at poker. It did not usually affect me for long. If I had been earning my own money it would have been different.

I did not like to take the thing home. I would have to answer too many questions. I could have answered them easily enough in a way that I was used to, but it was too much trouble. I had cut school for part of the day to attend the sale. I did not care to remain to the rest of the sale. The disappointment had taken the edge off the pleasure for

this time. As it was still early, and as there was nothing else to do, there was time to change my mind and go to school yet, which I did, taking the bronze with me and putting it in my desk. As I came in late, the head-master noticed my movements. After the session he asked me, in a friendly interested way, what I had brought to school. I showed him, calling it a gravy boat, and saying that I had seen it going cheap at a sale and thought it might be of value as an antique.

“You will probably be mistaken in that,” he said. “That is not an antique, it is only an imitation. It is not a gravy boat either, it is a lamp. I have seen many such when abroad, in the British Museum. It is the kind the ancients used, more particularly the Greeks and Romans. They filled it with oil and put a wick of some kind in the spout. The end projected and was lighted. I have never seen any exactly like this, however. They are usually ornamented. This is not. They are usually of heavy metal and cast. This is worked up out of very thin sheet metal and soldered in some way. It is as plain as a pipe stem. It looks as if some one had been trying to imitate Roman work, but without the necessary skill. It looks Chinese. Still it is as useful for an ornament as an old horse-shoe or spinning-wheel. Take it

home to your mother. She can tie a ribbon on the handle and hang it in the parlor."

I did so. That is the way I got my lamp. If it had only been Aladdin's lamp, as mother suggested, but unfortunately it wasn't.

## CHAPTER III.

## WHY I THOUGHT SO.

I TOLD mother about it, leading her to infer that the master had purchased it and had given it to me, because he did not think it of enough value to keep it himself. Mother evidently thought as he did as to its value, but did not want me to think she disapproved of any suggestion from the head-master. She was not one of the kind that gilded up old wash-benches or old shoes for curiosities, but she tied on the ribbon and put the lamp where the master had suggested. I did not like that, for it reminded me of the two dollars, but I had to grin and bear it. If I could have turned it into money I would soon have done so.

Mother's suggestion about Aladdin had set me thinking. I was rather rusty at that kind of thing, but I could think if I had to. I did not read very much. When I did, I preferred light literature. I

could better manage such works as "Dare Dick the Bloody Avenger," "The Last Trump for Shootaway," "Bill the He-devil of Roaring-camp," or "Mullika, King of the Roving Pirates of Swankum." These books read themselves without any trouble. I had once been persuaded, when much younger, to read *Aladdin*, under the false pretense that it was a narrative suited to my mental digestion, but I had not been interested, and so did not remember much of it.

When mother set me thinking I remembered that there was something in that story about a young man who got nearly everything that he wanted without much trouble to himself. I reflected that, sooner or later, I should have to do something for myself. Though it was unpleasant to be obliged to read a distasteful book, it would be good schooling. I should have to learn to work, I supposed, and I might as well begin now as at any time. Besides, it might lead to something which would save trouble in the end. I therefore borrowed the book and began, spending such time as I could spare from more congenial pursuits.

I found myself, as I proceeded, more interested than I had expected. My more mature reading had developed points in the story which had been before

overlooked. Coincidences are remarkable things, though they do sometimes happen. I was struck with the similarity between myself and the young hero, before he had the luck to find the lamp, in position, likings, and pursuits.

Aladdin was the son of a tailor, so was I. I meant no disrespect to my father, for of course I understood that the old-fashioned workman was but a journeyman, a jobber, not a merchant tailor. The father of Aladdin, to-day, I had no doubt, would have had no standing in society as mine had, but I supposed that, in his day, Aladdin's father was as good as the best. Aladdin's father had died, so had mine. Aladdin had not liked to work as a boy, and certainly not at his father's business. I could not help but have a fellow-feeling for him. There was a difference, however. Aladdin was called idle and lazy. I was only waiting to find my proper vocation. Of course, while I was waiting, it was not necessary to work, for I might be uselessly trying at the wrong thing. Aladdin's mother had shut up his father's shop after his death, when she found that the son did not take to the business, and that she could not carry it on herself. That was our case exactly.

I wish that the parallel could have gone further and included my unfortunate lamp purchase. But

there it stopped. I knew that Aladdin's story was all a fiction, for this reason. It was said to have taken place in Cathay. Now, there was no such place. I took the trouble to look it up, but the name did not appear on any map or geography that I could find. The head-master saw me looking in the big school dictionary one day. He asked me whether I had found what I was hunting. I told him I had not. He then asked me what it was I wanted to know. You see it was unusual for me to do such things and it created comment. Another boy might have gone to the dictionary twenty times and no one would have noticed it.

When I told the head-master that I wanted to find out where Cathay was, he said that I should have looked in the Gazetteer, not in the dictionary. He then told me that Cathay was the old name for China and the eastern part of Tartary.

It at once struck me that here was another point of similarity.

"Is Hong Kong in what used to be Cathay," I asked.

"Undoubtedly," said the head-master.

I said no more, but, like the Irishman's owl, did a deal of thinking.

I had an idea, you see, that the story might have



been true. The wish was father to the thought. If it was true, why had nothing further ever been heard about the lamp? Where was it now?

I looked through the story carefully, and could not find that anything was said on that important subject. At the time the lamp was last used to procure the roc's egg to suspend in the center of the dome of the palace, which so incensed the slave of the lamp that he forgot his usual dignity and politeness, the lamp was still in Aladdin's possession. After that all mention of it ceases. The story goes on about the death of the Sultan, how Aladdin succeeded to the throne, and about one or two such unimportant matters, but it does not tell who got the lamp at his death or anything further about it.

"It is a beastly story," I thought, "to leave out the most important thing."

The idea grew upon me that there was something in this lamp matter worth looking into. I did not want to be made a laughing-stock, or to find myself a fool for my pains, even if no one knew of it, so I made no useless experiments. But I was so anxious to find some way to make a good living without trouble to myself, I could not help thinking what a glorious thing it would be if only there was such a thing as Aladdin's lamp nowadays, and particularly

if I should happen to own it. You see, the idea that I got mine from China, which I found was Cathay, quite upset me, and made me willing to believe anything. If it had been the right lamp, I should have been glad that I came across it at a sale, and did not have to go into a horrid cave after it, even if I could have brought up all the precious stones in creation. That wouldn't have been my forte. I could consider, and think, and plan, as I did in this case, and it was well that I was able to do so. Had I not I would have missed the chance of a lifetime. My opinion is that a boy with good brains does not need application. He will get on if you only let him alone. He will find a way in time somehow. It is only a question where you want him to get on to.

As I was saying, I wanted the thing so much, that I finally actually got myself to believe that this lamp was Aladdin's own, else how did it come from China. I looked at the pictures in the book, and my lamp corresponded exactly in shape and general appearance. I learned from the story that it should be a copper lamp, not bronze, for when the wicked African magician went about offering to exchange new lamps for old, he ordered a dozen copper lamps. It therefore stood to reason that the lamp he wanted to get was copper. I looked closer at mine, and found

that while it appeared to be bronze it was really old discolored copper. That discovery set me nearly crazy, so much so that I would have believed anything about the lamp that any one might have chosen to tell me. I was sure I had found the genuine article.

But somehow, as soon as I would get myself fully convinced of that fact, I would laugh at myself for being so ridiculous. I could dream as much as I pleased over the book, but the next day I had to come back to the ordinary everyday life of the present time. My common-sense would upset all my fancies, no matter how much I believed in them at the time. It was of course impossible that such a story could have been true, even at the time referred to, but at the present time certainly not. If it was true, it would be awfully inconvenient to work the lamp business without being found out and laughed at. I would as soon work as be laughed at—almost.

## CHAPTER IV.

## I NEED A BICYCLE.

I KNEW I was foolish, but I couldn't help it. I was always prone to believe supernatural things. Though I was some sixteen years old, I thought it would do no harm to have a trial of the lamp and see if there was any good in it. I would keep it quiet. If I failed no one would know what a fool I had been. If not, what a lark! You might probably have acted as I did if you had been placed as I was; was not kept busy, had plenty of time to brood, and did not have your mind filled up with other things.

I can remember to this day how frightened I was when I made up my mind to try it. It was not so much fright at the consequences if my theory should prove correct, but the dread of ridicule if my idea should be found out. I took good care that mother knew nothing about it. I did not even touch the lamp for fear she would know I had done so. I only looked at it, but never let her see me doing so. That's why I

had made up my mind to try it, I kept putting off the day. I would fix a certain time and say, "Now for certain on that day I shall try it," but something always turned up to prevent when the appointed time came. I was glad to put it off on any little excuse. If I did not feel exactly like it, I would say to myself that I was not well, and it would be folly to try it unless I felt fully equal to it. If mother was anywhere around, that was the excuse. I had thought I would try it in a certain secluded upstairs room. At the time fixed, that room was being swept, and I could not.

After fooling around for weeks in that way, I made up my mind that I would not fix a time again. I would wait until I felt just like it, off-hand, and everything was suitable. I kept on the watch for just such a time for about six weeks, but it never came. By that time my fancy had pretty well worked itself out, and I laughed at myself for being so foolish.

Things were in this state when there came a crisis in my affairs. I wanted a bicycle. Though I had no money, I went around to all the stores, examined into the merits of each kind, and accepted numerous catalogues, price-lists, and recommendations. It had been impressed upon me, if I wanted a good machine, that would need the least repair and give the most satis-

faction, that it would be useless to buy any cheap goods. Anything from fifty to seventy dollars it would be a waste of money to buy. The kind that was just what I needed cost one hundred and fifty, and it was cheap at that. It would stand any amount of wear, would never go out of style, and could not be improved upon. I took the papers and reserved my decision. How to get the machine was the problem. I consulted mother about it. I knew that it would be hard for her to spare that much money at once, but I thought she might be willing to work a little harder and give me the money to save up, gradually, until I should have enough.

Mother was horrified when I made the proposition.

"Why, that would cost as much as a piano," she said.

"But it's worth more than a piano," I said. "I don't want a piano. It wouldn't be any use to me."

"A piano might be of use to me," she replied. We used to own one, but mother had sold it, I don't know why. If she wanted one she ought to have kept it.

"If you had such a thing, where would you keep it?" she added. "We have no place."

I replied that I would find a place somewhere.

"But I couldn't give you that much money for years," she said. "It is as much as I can do to keep

body and soul together, and the house over our heads. You must be educated, too."

"If I stopped school for a while, mother, couldn't you let me take that money?"

This request rather pained her, I thought, so I did not press it; though I was no less determined that I would have that bicycle. As mother would not help me, I would have to try what I could do myself. I might work for it, I supposed, if I had to.

As I had never worked for anything, the amount required was rather large to begin with, but I did not fully appreciate that at the time. I thought that if I did conclude to work, it would be as easy to earn a large amount as a small one. I kept thinking over the matter for several days, bringing my brain-powers to bear upon the problem. These powers have never really failed me in all my career, if I was only sufficiently interested to make them work. But with all my thinking, I did not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. I could not think what to work at, to get the money, that would not be too much trouble. It seemed more trouble to find the work than it would be to do it.

"I will have to find some other way to get it," I thought, but did nothing.

About that time the bicycle agent, who had been

most anxious to sell, sent one to the house for me to see. It was an elegant affair worth double the money. I wished mother could see it, but she was not at home. I thought if she could only see it, she would repent her hasty decision and raise the money. I told the man that if he would leave the machine over night, I would see what I could do. He agreed, unwillingly, to do so. I did not know where to put it, for our house was not large. By moving the sofa out into the hall, I found that I could get it into the parlor. I thought mother would not mind, she did not usually, if it was anything I wanted that she could do for me. You see I was an only child, in that like Aladdin again.

We had one servant, Maggie, an Irishwoman, who had lived with us ever since before father died. She was in the house at the time, and growled considerably at the 'cycle going into the parlor, but I told her to let it stay there until mother came home, so she consented.

I was so crazy to own the bicycle that I felt brave enough to do anything. I just then happened to see the lamp in the parlor, and thought how elegant it would be if there was any good in the thing. I could have the bicycle or anything else I might want. I considered that mother was out, and the house as



ready as it ever would be. There could not be a better time. Why not try it now while I felt like it? It was all nonsense, I admitted, I was sure of that. But it would be some satisfaction to know that I had tried.

Maggie, the servant, had retired to the kitchen, so the coast was clear. I snatched the lamp and rushed upstairs with it, fearful lest I should get over the notion before I carried it out, and shut myself into the room selected.

I felt very foolish as I set the lamp down and proceeded to rub it after the approved style mentioned in the book. I rubbed my palm gently over the rounding side, where the color was a little lighter, as if it had been rubbed there before. As I did so, I looked timidly around the apartment, looking for the slave of the lamp to appear. Of course it produced no effect. My courage returned as I found that I had been "sold," so I gave it another and a harder rub. I laughed at myself for my foolishness. I thought I had better return the lamp to its place, before mother came home and missed it, and so save explanations. I started downstairs to do so.

Just then the front door bell rang violently.

"That's mother," I said to myself, and turned back again with the lamp, so that mother would not catch me with it in my hands.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE SLAVE APPEARS.

THERE appeared to be quite a disturbance at the front door over something. It was not mother, surely. There was some loud talking. One of the voices I recognized as Maggie's. She was quite excited. I went to the head of the stairs to overlook the scene. Maggie was barring the way, trying to prevent the entrance of an old beggar-man, who appeared very anxious to get into the house. He spoke in a loud and angry voice. Maggie answered him in a similar manner.

"Get out with ye," Maggie was saying. "You'll not be after coming in here, ye crazy loonatic, you, with yer heathen palaver."

"What's he want, Maggie?" I demanded from above.

"He says he's after a lamp, and we don't use 'em," replied Maggie.

I went to the door to investigate. The man was rather a disreputable specimen. He was of large size and peculiar appearance. He was dressed as an ordinary working person would dress upon the street. He had on a cardigan jacket and round fur cap, made with lapels to turn down. His trousers were somewhat worn. Somehow the whole outfit did not appear to fit him, or at least he did not appear at ease in them. It did not seem as if it belonged to him. It was not his style. Though dressed as any other carman or laborer might be, he still presented so peculiar an appearance from some cause as to make him an oddity. Several boys had followed him to the door, and stood watching him.

"What do you want?" I demanded.

"What do you wish?" said the beggar. "I am ready to obey you as your private secretary and expert, and as the expert of those who have a lease on the lamp, both I and the other experts of the lamp syndicate."

"That's what he's been a-saying. Whoever heard such nonsense," said Maggie hotly. "The man don't know what he wants himself. Out with ye, ye heathen hypocrite!"

"Not so fast, Maggie," I said. I began to think that this was the slave of the lamp, which I had ex-

pected, though he came in an unexpected way. I wanted to inquire further. "Let him come in, Maggie, I want to see him."

"I wish your mother was at home, then, Master Thomas, to prevent ye," said Maggie. "If ye'll be after having such crazy truck in the house, it's time you had some one to pick and choose your company. I'll be after locking up the spoons, anyway."

Maggie gave way reluctantly, and I said very politely, for I was rather afraid of the man: "Will you come in, sir? I'll attend to you at once. Come upstairs."

I led the way to the secluded room and shut the door. I told him to be seated, and he sat. I then began the conversation.

"Are you the gentleman that I expected in answer to my summons on the lamp?"

"I am, sir, and bad luck to this country, I could not come sooner. I am used to countries where doors are wide open always. One can slip in as called and appear at once. Here we have to ring door-bells, and get past Irish servants. It's a deal of trouble and don't pay. If I wasn't under contract for a definite time, I'd quit."

"Don't let that trouble you," I urged. "I understand the circumstances exactly. I assure you I sym-

pathize with you about the entire trouble, and any shortcomings are fully accounted for."

"And I'm a little rusty, too. I'm out of practice," continued the expert. "You see that lamp has gone out of service several times. I've had a rest now for several years. It was a deal of a bother, though, lately. You see some one packed the bloody lamp in paper and sent it on a long journey by sea and land. The motion of the vessels and conveyances was continually rubbing the blamed thing. It wasn't packed properly, and would rub. Whenever I would hear a rub at the receiver, I'd have to start off to find the cause. Sometimes I'd have to hire a special vessel to follow it up on the ocean; at other times a special engine to catch up to it on land, only to find that nobody wanted me. I'd sooner work hard in my regular line than be fooled in that way. But what do you want?"

I had been so taken aback by the unexpected occurrence, that I had really forgotten what I had wanted when I called him. I mumbled out something about having rubbed the lamp only to try if it was any good.

"No, you didn't, young man, I know better," exclaimed the expert. "You needn't think because you've got me by the whip-handle, that you can do

just as you like, and give me all the trouble for nothing. I can remind you what you want. Every new man that gets a lease on the lamp begins with wanting something to eat. You know you want something good to eat. Have you the bill of fare made out?"

I remembered that mother had been furnishing rather poor meals lately, for some reason. I suppose she did not work hard enough to get enough money in. The meals had certainly been deficient, both in quality, variety, and quantity. In fact, I often went away from the table quite hungry. By that, I mean that I did not feel just right full, like you do after a Thanksgiving or a Christmas dinner; kind of run in, you know, like metal in a mold, all cracks filled up. I don't know how mother had managed to put up with such poor fare, for she was as used to better as I had been. I should have thought it would have made an impression, so as to make her work harder. Then short rations would not have been necessary, if they really ever were. I therefore gave the expert to understand that I should not object to something inviting to eat, but that I had no particular preferences as to what it should be. I had forgotten all about the bicycle for the time being.

"Correct," said the expert. "What time do you dine?"

I said usually at about six P. M.

"It will be served at that time," he said. "But remember one thing, we don't provide silver services any longer. There was so much of that miserable selling and pawning business going on (which was in poor taste to say the least) after we had accommodated our patrons to a good meal, that the syndicate simply could not stand it. We furnish everything now in wooden picnic plates and in tin dishes which you can throw away when done with. You can either eat off these, or furnish your own dish outfit. If you have nothing decent, and wish to ring expressly for that, we will bring you something nice in that line, china-ware, but the order must not be repeated. We only furnish such things once."

I inquired if the proposed repast was to be first-class. In reply he produced a bill of fare to select from. It was partly in French, so I did not understand it.

"Can't you bring me the whole bill of fare?" I inquired.

"If you're hog enough to order it, yes."

I was hog enough, so I ordered it.

"And look here, Expert (whatever your name is), can't you take the order now for the china?" I asked. "It will save you the trouble of my ringing again."

This looks as if it was going to be a pretty fair spread. We have nothing decent to serve that style on."

"It's against regulations," said the expert, "but I'll make an exception this time, as you're green at the business. But remember, you'll only get the outfit once."

I said I'd remember, and asked for the name of my visitor, so that I'd know what to call him.

"Are you a genie?" I said.

"No, genie is not correct nowadays," said the expert. "That's a corruption of two words, Jinnee, plural Jinn, and Genius, plural Genii. You can call me a genius if you like, but I don't like it. They call every man who intends to do anything, and fails to do it, a genius: that's why I don't like it. I'm properly a Jinnee in my own country, but people don't know what that is, as a rule."

I was willing to propitiate the individual, so I said:

"All right. I'll call you Jinn for short, if you like it better."

"I do," said he.

"That much is settled then," said I.

"Is there anything else to-day?" he inquired.

"Not at this time, I believe," I replied.



I had hardly got the words out of my mouth, when he vanished like a flash. I heard the front door downstairs bang, in an incredibly short time afterwards; so hard as to bring Maggie from the kitchen.

"Was it that spalpeen went out?" she remarked.

"Now look here, Maggie," I began, "that gentleman's a friend of mine. I do not wish you to show him any impoliteness. He's crude and peculiar, I'll admit, but he's a good fellow. He's Mr. Jinn. Whenever he calls, no matter what he says, I want him always to be allowed to come up to see me at once. You understand?"

"But your mother, boy?" said Maggie. "What will she say to such stable-boy company for you?"

"Oh, I'll make that all right. He's not exactly my friend himself, but he works for a friend of mine. And, Maggie, you needn't cook dinner this evening. My friend, that Mr. Jinn works for, is going to send us a banquet."

"I wouldn't be apt to do much cooking anyhow," Maggie replied, "for the reason that there's precious little to cook. If your mother don't collect the money she's after, before she comes home, so that she can bring the groceries with her, we'll be clean out. She wouldn't let you know it, though, if she starved. There are some lazy people around this house some-

where, that eat up everything and give nothing back."

"I never heard mother complain of you for being lazy, Maggie. You mustn't blame yourself unjustly."

At this Maggie returned to the kitchen and banged her door, nearly as hard as Jinn had the front door. Irish girls are awfully queer sometimes.

## CHAPTER .

### DINNER FOR TWO, AND MOVE LIVELY.

I TOOK the precaution to keep the lamp upstairs, and to lock it up in a closet in my own room. When mother came home she looked rather out of sorts, I thought, but she brightened up when she saw me. She caught sight of the bicycle in the parlor, just afterwards, when her face clouded up again.

"Don't be worried, mother," I hastened to explain. "I didn't buy it. It's only here on trial. If you can't buy it, perhaps they'll let me keep it a while anyhow. I'll get that much good out of it."

She said nothing about its being in the parlor, so I suppose she did not particularly care. I always knew that if she particularly objected, she said so emphatically. If she only growled a little, I knew that I could get her to consent, after a little teasing.

For fear that I should forget it, I told her at once about having taken the lamp away. "I'm using it

upstairs, if you don't care. It's just the kind of thing I wanted for something I was doing."

She nodded, so I knew that was all right. She would never think of it again. I would not have to explain. I did not want to tell her that this was the wonderful lamp. I was rather in a whirl about it and did not know just what to do. I didn't exactly believe in it myself yet. It was all so sudden. Besides, I did not want to be laughed at. I had to explain about the banquet. I began :

"Say, mother, I've good news for you. There's a friend of mine—you mustn't ask me who he is just now—who is going to send a present here to-night. It's all right and it's all paid for, at least I'm led to believe so. We're going to have a kind of spread."

"Something to eat, you mean?" she asked.

"Yes, mother, something good."

Mother seemed rather pleased, I thought, or relieved about something.

"Are you sure it's all right?" she asked. "I don't want anything that isn't come by honestly."

I reassured her as best I could. Just then a wagon drove up, and we looked out of the window. On its side was painted the name of a prominent china-ware house in the city. When Maggie answered the bell, the driver passed in several baskets packed with

straw, and an invoice. Mother went to investigate.

"Surely you didn't order all this," she said to me.  
"We can never pay for it."

I looked at the invoice. It was made out in my name at the proper address. It gave a list of the articles delivered, and at the bottom was written "Paid" in large letters. I showed this to mother. She seemed partially satisfied, though she did not understand it.

"Who do you know that would send you such things?"

I said: "I cannot tell you at present, but I am sure it is all right. I told you I would come out all right, and I have. Trust me, mother. You can ask Mr. Jinn when he comes. He's the man that told me."

"Who's Mr. Jinn?" asked mother.

Just then Mr. Jinn himself drove up in a well-known caterer's wagon. "There he is now, mother." I hastened to warn him.

"Jinn, I want you to make it all right with the old lady; can you?"

"You bet your bottom dollar I can," said he, "both I and the other experts of the lamp syndicate."

He came in at once, took off his cap to mother, quite politely, and said:

"It's all right, ma'am. You couldn't make us take this truck away again if you tried, after all the trouble of getting it here. The young one ain't doing any thing out of the way. It's an outside party as knows you, but you don't know him. You better take my word for it and enjoy your good luck while you can."

Mother gave up for the time.

"Please step upstairs, ma'am, until I get things arranged. When the bell rings, come at once before the things get cold," said Jinn.

Mother did as requested, and went to her own room to take off her wraps and dress for dinner.

"Look here, Jinn," I said; "do you require a special call for everything a fellow wants? I forgot something."

"That's regulations. Every call is registered automatically. There's no other way of telling if the call's answered properly."

I stepped upstairs, got out the lamp, and gave it a gentle rub. Jinn must have followed me, for he opened the door the same instant.

"What do you wish?" he said, in an ordinary tone of voice. "I am ready to obey you as your private secretary and expert, and as the expert of those who have a lease on the lamp, both I and the other experts of the lamp syndicate."

"Jinn, I want a bicycle like the one downstairs and a place to put it in."

"Before dinner?" asked Jinn.

"No, not before dinner, but I thought I'd save you an extra trip. Have you a moment to spare now?"

Jinn grumbled, but said he would have to wait if I said so, even if dinner was late. I told him to sit down. He did so, and asked if the bicycle downstairs would do.

"It's just the thing," I declared.

"All right. I'll arrange that," said Jinn. "Where do you want to keep it? in the parlor?"

"No, not in the parlor. It wouldn't be in the way there of anybody but mother, but the sofa would have to be in the entry, and that would be in my way, particularly in coming in at nights."

"Well, do you want a place for the bicycle or for the sofa?" demanded Jinn, rather testily. "Your directions must be definite. I'm not going to take the risk of blame for a badly-filled order when the fault isn't mine."

"A place for the bicycle," I said.

"Very good. Now, where do you want it? in the dining-room?"

"That's too small," I hastened to remark.

"In the cellar?"

"That's too damp."

"In the yard?"

"That's too wet."

"In the entry?"

"That would be a nuisance."

"On the roof?"

"That's out of the question."

"In your own room?"

"Couldn't get it there."

"It could be made to take apart easily."

"That would be too much trouble," I said, "unless I should call you every time, and that would be a trouble in itself."

"No, don't do it in that way," said Jinn.

"It appears to me the house is too small for the bicycle," suggested Jinn.

"That's just it," I admitted.

"Do you want a bigger house?" asked Jinn.

I was not exactly prepared to move to accommodate the bicycle, so I hesitated. Jinn hesitated also.

"Have you no suggestion to make?" he inquired finally.

"No, have you?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Why don't you give it, then?" I inquired.

"It isn't my place. You didn't ask me to."



"Well, what is it?"

"Store the bicycle."

"But who'll pay the storage?"

"I'll attend to that," said Jinn.

This was very satisfactory. But I happened to think,

"It must be stored near at hand and in a convenient place."

"Trust me for that," said Jinn. "Is there anything else to-day?"

"Not at this time, I believe," and Jinn vanished, slamming the door after him. I was careful not to say there was nothing else to-day, for I might want him again before the day was over.

## CHAPTER VII.

## COMMUNICATION INTERRUPTED.

AT six o'clock promptly the dinner-bell rang. I met mother on the stairs and we went down together. When we entered the dining room, there stood Jinn in a waiter's jacket, and in first-class condition, though his face still had the peculiar foreign expression. Maggie was invisible, but I could tell from the banging and moving around in the kitchen, that she was there, and evidently not in a good humor.

The table was set with a most tasty set of new china, and a few silver pieces. Candles with neat colored shades and flowers helped to decorate it. At mother's place and mine was a hand-painted menu. Mother glanced at hers. She seemed pleased, but remarked:

"This is a great waste for two people only."

"It's the young one's doings. He would have it. Nobody but a hog would have done it," said Jinn.

"Can't we save some of it for to-morrow?" said mother, who was used to planning ahead.

"No objections, ma'am. You won't catch me carting anything back. Whatever you don't choose to eat you can do what you like with. I might suggest that there's enough to eat what you want now, while it's good, and enjoy yourself."

This seemed to satisfy mother, and she settled herself, as I did, for a square meal.

The menu read like this :

HUITRES.

Blue Points. Shrewsbury.

SOUPE.

Bouillon à la Café. Rasped sandwiches.

POISSON.

Salmon croquettes. Lobster salad. Shad.

GIBIER.

Quail. Canvas-back duck.

Asparagus. Currant Jelly.

ROTS.

Bœuf à l'Angleterre. Poulet.

ENTREES.

Terrapin. Saratoga chips.

RELEVES.

Sweetbread outlets. French peas.

CHEESE.

Brie. Roquefort. Cream.

DESSERT.

Frozen fruits. Meringues. Charlotte Russe.

FRUITS.

COFFEE.

Mother almost fainted by the time she read it through. "Where shall we begin?" she gasped.

"Better begin at the beginning," said Jinn.

"What's Huftres?" I asked.

"Oysters, you ninny," said Jinn.

"Why don't you put it in English, then?"

"Must be in French or Chinese. That's regulations. I'm tired of Chinese myself. It's blowed," said Jinn.

"Oh, I see, two kinds of oysters. Bring us some of both, plenty, you know," I said.

Jinn returned to the kitchen and came back with two large waiters full of oysters on the half-shell, one of which he put before mother, the other before me. I thought mine was all right, but mother seemed surprised at the quantity.

"This is extravagance," she said.

"There's nothing mean about the lamp syndicate," said Jinn.

I looked at him warningly. He understood at once, and was silent. Mother did not understand. She probably thought he was talking some slang.

"Look here, Jinn," I said. "You'd better translate the whole programme while you're at it. Soupe is soup, I suppose. What's Poison?"

"Poisson," corrected Jinn. "Fish."

"Why didn't you say fish, then?"

"For reasons which have already been explained to you," replied Jinn, majestically.

"Giblets is giblets, I suppose."

"Gibier, game," corrected Jinn.

"Now, what in thunder's rots?" I continued.

"That's enough to take away one's appetite."

"Rôts is roasts," said Jinn.

"I see," I replied. "Roast beef of old England and pullets."

"No, chicken," said Jinn.

"The rest is all plain sailing. Thank you, Jinn."

We ate as much as we could, but could not make much of an impression on two chickens and two or three ribs of beef, to say nothing of everything else. We had enough left for about a week, if I had only liked warmed-over things. I saw I was in for that, however.

Jinn attended well to all the courses. When the meal was through he helped Maggie to the eatables in the kitchen, then put away all the leavings in proper places, washed up the dishes, and came into the parlor, where I sat with mother, cardigan on and cap in hand.

"Is there anything else to-day?"

I could not resist the temptation of a little joke.

"Not to-day," I answered.

"Some other day?" asked Jinn.

"Yes, good-day."

Jinn was off like a flash. The jarring of the front door disturbed mother. She said:

"I hope, Thomas, you will not be too intimate with this strange man. Remember he is nothing but a servant. He is below you. Don't be too familiar with him. I wish I knew something about him or his master. If his master is as rough as he is, I would not like you to be intimate with either. I don't like his looks. I wish you would not make intimate friends, especially among such rough people, unless I know something about them."

I did not pay much attention to what mother was saying, for just then I was thinking about the bicycle, which stood there in the parlor before me. It reminded me that Jinn had gone off without doing anything about that. I was provoked, for I wanted the bicycle more than I wanted the dinner. I made an excuse to go to my room, got out the lamp, and rubbed it gently. After waiting a short time, hearing no response at the door bell, I rubbed again, slightly harder. Still no response.

"Guess the battery's out of order," I said to myself.

I recollected that Aladdin's mother, when she put what was probably this very same lamp in working order, years ago, took sand and attempted to scour it. There was something wrong with the connection evidently, and it would take something more than ordinary to get a response.

I went down into the kitchen and got a material which is usually called bath-brick, for polishing table-knives, and the rags which had been used to apply it. Taking these to my room, I laid out a newspaper on the table, put the lamp on it, and rubbed the light spot until it shone; still there was no response.

Perhaps the front door bell was broken. No, for in that case Jinn would pound on the door. To make sure, I leaned out of the window and got a complete view of the door-step. There was no one there.

Then I went back to the table, sat down, and began to rub the lamp vigorously. Not hearing anything, I kept on until I had the whole lamp as bright as if it had just come out of the shop; still nothing from Jinn.

I was quite discouraged. I could not understand it. The thing worked for a while, then it did not. There was something wrong. What was it? How should I find out? I got one meal out of the thing

anyhow, but that was as nothing compared with the chance of a bicycle. I could not help thinking that if it had worked once it might again, so I returned to the work, rubbing harder than ever. I thought, as a person naturally talks very much harder through a telephone that does not work well, that I might get the lamp to give more response by greater muscular exertion. It was all to no purpose. There was nothing to do but go to bed, which I did, badly out of humor, and in no mood to be at all reasonable about anything.



**CHAPTER VIII.****A MIDNIGHT DISTURBANCE.**

It seemed to me that I had hardly closed my eyes, though in fact I had been in a sound sleep for nearly two hours, when I was awakened by what appeared to be a tremendous uproar. Maggie was screaming in her room and mother in hers. When I got fully awake I heard a mighty thumping, kicking and clubbing at the front door, continued with frequent and very emphatic rings at the bell. The commotion was sufficient to rouse the whole neighborhood. Soon my mother's voice was heard, outside my door, calling me.

I answered. As soon as she heard that I was awake, she pushed the door open slightly and began to upbraid me.

"What did I tell you about the evils of low company, Thomas? There is that low fellow Jinn, at the door, as drunk as a lord. He did not get any-

thing to drink here. He has mistaken our house for his, and insists upon coming in. I do not want you to go down, but something will have to be done."

All this time the uproar continued and the door threatened to break open under Jinn's vigorous kicks. I was in no very good humor at being disturbed in that manner, but I was rather glad that Jinn had turned up again, even if he was drunk. Of course the drink would account for his want of attention to the earlier summons. I put on a pair of trousers, slippers, and a wrapper, and went down to see him, mother and Maggie following me at a safe distance.

Jinn did not stop his noise until I had the door fully open, by which time half the windows in the block were occupied, and various missiles were flying quite frequently in the direction of our door. Jinn did not mind them in the least. His whole attention was fixed upon getting an entrance to our house.

As soon as the door was opened, he let out at me in a tremendous voice, that mother, Maggie, and all the neighbors could not fail to hear,

"What do you wish? I am ready to obey you as your private secretary and expert, and as the expert of those who have a lease on the lamp, both I and the other experts of the lamp syndicate."

"Chestnuts," I said. "Why didn't you come when I called you, instead of at this time of night?"

"You lied, young man," said Jinn. "You said there was nothing else to-day, meaning yesterday, so I was not obliged to come until the day was over. It is just after twelve o'clock now." This was all in the same tremendous tone.

I recollected my little pleasantry, also how hard I had rubbed the lamp, so I did not wonder at the noise he had made to get in, or in speaking. The lamp worked that way—the greater rub, the greater effect.

Mother thought he was raving drunk. She had gone for a pistol which she kept in the house unloaded. She came behind me and put it into my hand. It was an old-fashioned flint-lock, which had probably not been fired since the year one. It was certainly not loaded now. If it had been there was no way of exploding it. There was no flint in the hammer, and no powder in the pan.

"Mother," I said, "I can easily manage him. You and Maggie go back to bed. You only help to make more disturbance. I cannot do anything while you are here."

After some persuasion they both went, and I was able to attend to Jinn.

"I did rub the lamp some time ago," I replied. "I had forgotten that I said I did not want anything more to-day. I will not do so in future. There is no telling what one may want. But you should have had more sense than to disturb us at this time of night."

"My contract with the government calls for rapid service, day or night, except as exempted," said Jinn.

"Very well, Jinn, let that rest. I only wanted to ask you about the bicycle."

"Young man, you gave that order once before, and it's on file now."

"But you did not say that it would be attended to."

"All orders are attended to," said Jinn. "That's business. Haven't you got the bicycle?"

I admitted that I had, but not the place to store it.

"Do you want it stored to-night? Most places are shut. I shall have to knock some one up, as I did you."

I said that would be unnecessary.

"Then what are you blowing about, anyhow?" said Jinn. "Is there anything else this evening?"

I was careful about my reply.

"Not that I know of at present."

Before I got the words out, he was gone like a flash. It was not desirable to leave anything to re-

mind the neighbors of the occurrence, so I went out and gathered up the various articles which had been thrown at Jinn. There were about a dozen old shoes, boots, and slippers, one hair-brush, a tooth-brush, a whisk-broom, a set of false teeth, and various other articles, all of which I stored in the vestibule ; then I went back to bed.

In the morning mother was rather gloomy, and Maggie more so. Maggie vowed she was not going to clear up the trash in the vestibule after any drunken sot that I might choose to bring in at any time of the night. I let them think that he was drunk, for I could not explain, but mother made a dead-set for me to give up having anything to do with him.

By the first morning mail-delivery I received a letter, which, when opened, was found to contain a receipted bill for the bicycle, mailed the previous day. I had hardly read it before I was asked for by a messenger, who said that he had been sent for the bicycle, which was to be stored at their place. I asked where he was from, and he said Janson's stables, which was an elegant establishment just around the corner. He took the wheel, and after breakfast I went to investigate. I was received very cordially by the proprietor, who showed me the bicycle, elegantly accommodated in the dry harness-room, and in a beveled

plate-glass case, made to fit it exactly, which he said had been sent there the evening before.

"And the charges ?" I asked.

"I beg your pardon for not mailing you your receipt, as soon as I got your money, but I could not help it."

He handed me a bill and receipt for one year's storage. I wisely kept silent, as I did not wish to change his impression that I had sent the money.

I was, as may be imagined, greatly pleased with the bicycle and its elegant accommodations, but it did not do me much good, at least for a while. I could not use it, for the reason that I was taken sick, and had to stay in the house in bed for several weeks. I was not sorry to lose the schooling, but I was greatly put out about the bicycle. To think of missing such elegant chances right after I had made sure of the long-desired "bike." It was too bad.

I think that rascally Jinn must have been the cause of my sickness, for I commenced to feel it right after I had been called up in the middle of the night to attend to him. When he made that infernal racket, I had gone down bareheaded, in slippers, and with only a loose wrapper over my night-shirt. I had kept inside the doorway as much as possible, but after he had gone I had to fool around outside for quite a

while, gathering up the neighbors' shoes and other material. The next morning I was quite stiff. Before night neuralgic pains began to shoot through my back and sides, and by the next day I was in a raging fever. You may be sure that I blessed Jinn, but I did not call him up on purpose to upbraid him; for now the injury was done, no amount of good dinners or fine bicycles could repair the damage. It was something beyond his control.

I had to go to bed, and fretted and fumed for several days, dozing in the day-time and lying awake at night. Mother did what she could, but that was not much. She thought it was only an attack of cold or rheumatism. She did not care to call a doctor. They were expensive, and I suppose mother did not care to spend the money. She was real mean in that way, sometimes, when there was anything important. If she had only known what I was losing, she might have thought differently. As I had not told her about the bicycle, she could not know. She supposed it had been sent back to the owner. I did not dare tell her that it was mine.

One night while I was fuming to myself as usual, I heard an alarm of fire. It was not far off, I was certain. I could tell by the way the noise continued in our neighborhood. Before very long a neighbor

threw up his window, hailed a passer-by and asked where it was.

“Janson’s stables,” was the hasty reply.

Then you may be sure I was in a state of mind. Here was my elegant outfit going to the dogs, in a miserable stable fire, and me tied to my bed in this unlucky manner. I tried to get up, but found it impossible. My head swam, the pains ran through me in every direction. I gave it up at the first attempt, and spent the rest of the night in no very comfortable style. I was determined I would find out all about it in the morning.



CHAPTER IX.

CALL THE DOCTOR.

WHEN daylight came, I called Maggie, and said :

“Maggie, you know that man Jinn?”

“Wouldn’t recognize him for a ten-dollar bill, the crazy lunatic,” said Maggie.

“I don’t mean that. I mean you know who Jinn is.”

“I’m not apt to forget such a drunken scamp, if I tried. What is it he’s always saying when he comes after ye, anyhow?”

“That’s nothing, Maggie, only our little fun. I told him to say the same thing, so as to be sure who it is. It’s a kind of secret pass-word.”

“A secret society! The saints deliver us! All unholy Masons and such bloody devils are the devil’s own. See me hold a cross to him next time, and make him wilt, that’s all.”

“No, Maggie. Don’t be foolish. He’s not a Mason. He’s the servant of a friend of mine, a wealthy man. It wouldn’t do to affront him.”

"Why don't he show the color of his money, then? They're as poor as Job's turkey, for all I know."

"How do you know how poor Job's turkey was?" I inquired.

Maggie did not answer. I have since found out that Job's turkey was so poor that he only had one feather in his tail, and so weak that he had to lean against the fence to gobble. No wonder Job growled.

"Well, all I wanted to say," I continued, "was that if Mr. Jinn comes this morning, as he probably will, I want to see him."

Maggie did not say she would keep him out, so I knew she would let him in, though she went off dissatisfied.

"And, Maggie," I said, calling her back, "when I get more money, I will make it all right with you for your trouble."

"It will be a mighty long while, then, before I'd see it, from such a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow as you are," blazed out Maggie.

You see, she did not understand me nor my position. Not many people did. She thought my mother was spoiling me, and that she never dared to say anything to me; so she took the chance sometimes to ease her mind.

"Don't be so sure of that, Maggie," I replied,

though at the time I made that remark I hadn't a cent to my name, and no immediate prospect of getting any, except, perhaps, by plaguing mother until she gave me some to get rid of the worry. "And, Maggie, before you go, just look in my trousers' pockets. You will find a key there."

Maggie found the key and handed it to me.

"Please open that closet with it."

Maggie did so.

I said, "There is that old gravy boat that used to hang in the parlor. I think you will find some pennies in it now, which you can have."

"Not a red copper in it," said Maggie, taking the lamp and turning it upside down. "Not that I'd take your old money, though. It wouldn't be worth while for the few cents you'd have left on hand."

"There must be some there, Maggie. Let me see."

Maggie handed me the lamp. I did not expect to find any pennies, but I got the lamp in my possession without having asked for it. I did not want to create suspicion.

"Well, Maggie, I can't account for it. You can leave the boat out awhile. I want to look at it."

As soon as Maggie had gone, I rubbed the lamp very slightly. I had received a lesson on the evils of rubbing it hard at the time of the night-disturbance.

As soon as I did so, I heard the front door bell tinkle very gently. A moment later Jinn walked into the room, as meek as Moses.

"Well, Jinn," I said, "you see I'm on my back; but I wanted to ask you about my bicycle."

"The more fool you for being there," replied Jinn, encouragingly. "There's nothing the matter with the bicycle."

"Wasn't the stable on fire?"

"No, the stable wasn't hurt. It was next door, and no great blaze anyhow. I wish to thunder you'd get well. I no sooner find the lamp in somebody's hands, where I think it's going to work regular, than up it goes again. I wish you had sense enough to get up and tend to business."

"Why, Jinn," I exclaimed, "I should have thought it would have just suited you to have a rest. You growl when you have to work too hard, and you growl when you don't have to work."

"It's my business to growl," said Jinn. "That's what I'm paid for. I don't like being kept in one place, forever waiting, with nothing to do, and I don't like being rushed. It's the irregularity, never knowing what's going to happen. One gets to thinking that the connection's broken, or something of that kind, and that we'll get reported for not attending

to business. I like a reasonable man to look after. I like regular employment without being too hard, neither too much nor too little."

"I'll try to accommodate you in future." I felt in a good humor when I heard that the bicycle was not injured. "But why do you say I'm a fool because I am not well? I'd be only too glad to get well if I knew how."

"Well, I'm not allowed to make suggestions. You didn't say a word about it," remarked Jinn.

"You don't mean to say, Jinn, that you could cure me, do you?"

"No, I don't say that, but I could have you cured if you asked me."

Here was certainly an oversight. I hastened to give the necessary orders.

Jinn sat down beside me and felt my pulse, taking out his watch to time it, which was a peculiar, old-fashioned time-piece. The dial had the hours marked with Arabic numerals in place of the ordinary Roman characters. It was inlaid with yellow and red enamel, had dragons engraved upon it and a dragon's head for the ring. It had a decidedly Chinese appearance. He then took out some writing-tablets, which appeared to be of porcelain, a brush and a little saucer in which he rubbed India ink, mixing it with

spittle. After he had counted my pulse beats and compared them with the watch, he wrote memoranda on the tablets with the brush and ink.

"You're behind the age, Jinn," I remarked. "You ought to have a fountain-pen and a note-book."

"Do you order it?" asked Jinn.

"I do."

"I'm glad of it. Modern business requires it, but I couldn't get it until I was ordered. It's against regulations. It shall be attended to."

After Jinn had felt my pulse, he made me stick out my tongue, of which he also took note. Then he punched me in certain parts of the body, and every place where it hurt he noted at once.

"How did you get it?" he inquired.

"Get what?"

"The sickness."

I mentioned the night-exposure. He did not seem at all abashed at what was evidently his own fault.

"You'll have more sense another time. I'm glad it happened. It will be a lesson to you. It served you right," was Jinn's consolation.

## CHAPTER X.

## DOCTORING EXTRAORDINARY.

I DID not feel like arguing with Jinn, so said nothing. After he had asked me about various symptoms, he said:

“What doctor do you want to attend to it?”

I had not expected this question, but I mentioned mother’s doctor at random.

“He’s no good,” said Jinn. “He only works for pay, not to cure.”

I had this opinion before, and was delighted to hear it corroborated by so high an authority, who must necessarily know. I then mentioned another name, the only knowledge of which was that I had seen it on a sign in passing.

“That man’s a blower,” said Jinn. “He makes every case a terrible one to get the credit of curing it. He always says measles is the small-pox. Besides, he wouldn’t undertake the case without seeing you, so as to make a larger charge. We don’t work

that way: I can give a doctor as much information in his office in five minutes, as he could get by seeing you. If the doctor is good, he can just as well prescribe for you on my information. The better the doctor, the easier he can tell what is the matter without seeing the patient. Some very expert doctors can tell from the look of my face alone, after I have seen the sick person, just what is wrong and what to do. It's all in the skill. The best doctors like to work for me in that way, because they can attend to more cases and at the least trouble to themselves. As I take so little of their time, they can afford to charge very little, and so I can afford to get the best. See?"

I thought it was an excellent plan. I was particularly pleased with the idea that here was a chance to tell infallibly which doctors were good and which were not; information which it is very hard to get, except by long experience, and possibly the loss of one's life while experimenting.

"If some of the doctors only knew what Jinn said of them," I thought, "how angry they would be."

I asked Jinn what doctor he would recommend. He said he was not allowed to throw business in the way of any one of them, to the detriment of others. The choice must come from me. It would lead to



trouble with the medical societies. The syndicate did not care to get into a row with anybody.

I asked Jinn whom he had consulted before. He mentioned a Chinese name, which I did not recognize.

"Don't you know who is the best doctor in the city?" asked Jinn.

I gave the name of a very eminent professor, who was sent for in great public cases, and who never went out of his office for an ordinary person. He usually received about ten thousand dollars as a retaining fee, at least, so the papers said. I mentioned his name simply to hear what Jinn would say. He did not seem surprised in the least.

"Do you know him?" I asked.

"All about him," said Jinn. "He's good enough. He can tell at a glance, while passing you on the street, just how long you will live."

"Don't ask him that, Jinn. I don't want to know. If I wasn't going to live long, I would be thinking of it, and that would spoil all the fun of the bicycle."

"I never ask more than is necessary. We don't want to pay for nothing," Jinn assured me.

"Is there anything else to-day?" asked Jinn.

"How do I know, Jinn, until the day's over? That's all I know of at present."

Jinn was gone before I got through speaking. I do not think he even heard the last part of my remarks. In a very short time he was back again.

"How did you get in?" I asked. I had not heard the front door bell.

"Left the door open on a crack," said Jinn.

"You'd better not let Maggie catch you at that. There'll be trouble, sure. I say, Jinn, can't you give Maggie a trifle to put her in a good humor? It'd held me with mother, with you coming here so often."

"I can," replied Jinn. "What do you mean by a trifle?"

"A little money."

"How much?"

"Anything you think best. Whatever will do the work."

"If you leave it to me, I'd say that five dollars would fill the bill."

"I haven't the slightest doubt that it would," I replied. "I wish I had as much."

"If you order it, perhaps I could spare you it, if it don't occur too often," Jinn informed me.

I lost no time in giving the necessary order. It was more important in my case than in Maggie's.

"Well, how about the doctor?" I asked.

He gave me a prescription before I finished tell-

ing him. "That's the way we do business. Had it filled around the corner. The doctor says to take as directed. In exactly two hours from the time the first drop of the first spoonful touches the bottom of your stomach, you will be well."

"How am I to tell so exactly?"

"It's no difference to you. If you want to know, measure the distance from your mouth to your stomach and time it," said Jinn, jokingly.

That joke rather pleased me, for it reminded me of a boat-race, or a time spurt on a wheel, or a horse-race. I kept up the idea for the fun of the thing.

"How could I do that, Jinn? I haven't any stop-watch."

"You ought to have," said Jinn. "It's necessary nowadays. I've been expecting you to ask for one ever since you ordered the 'bike.'"

It had not occurred to me that I wanted one, but since it was just as good as offered to me, I could not conveniently refuse. I had an old silver watch that had been my father's. Mother had saved it for me until I was old enough to take care of it. I did not think much of it. I did not know enough about my father to value it for his sake; besides, I knew that in most things he was an old foggy. As for valuing it for mother's sake, it had not been her watch anyhow. If

I was going to have a new one, I might as well have a good one.

"What make can you furnish?" I asked Jinn.

"Anything in the whole world," he replied.

"Can you just as well make it a repeater?" A repeater was something I had long desired, but the cheapest of these cost at least two hundred dollars.

"Certainly," said Jinn.

"And in a gold case?" I queried.

"Certainly."

"Well, then, bring me an American hunting-case, gold repeater and chronograph, or stop-watch, marking quarter seconds."

"Is there anything else to-day?" asked Jinn, without the shadow of a smile on his face. I suppose this inquiry was part of the regulations, but it was very annoying.

I reached over the side of the bed, got one of my slippers, and threw it at Jinn; from which I suppose he inferred that there was nothing else at present. I was rather afraid for a while that the action might be construed to mean that there was nothing else to-day; but when I came to think of it, I remembered that the action was one of dissent, not of agreement to the proposition, so I felt more easy. At all events, Jinn disappeared after I heaved the slipper at him. I

wished I had asked him about a watch-chain, but I did not like to call him back. I could attend to that another time. While I was thinking, the bell tinkled gently again. I knew it was Jinn, so I prepared to ask him at once. There was a knock at my room door. I said, "Come in," and Maggie entered, handing me a letter. It was without address or postmark. I opened it at once, while Maggie was in the room.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A WONDERFUL CURE.

As I opened the envelope, a five-dollar bill dropped out. There was nothing else in it. I understood at once, pressed the bill into a small ball in my hand, so that Maggie might not see it, and then looked up at her. Her face was beaming.

"Why, Maggie," I said, "what's the matter? Has anything good happened?"

"No," said Maggie, beaming all the time as she spoke, "nothing at all. I only thought that you'd want to send a message to the blessed gentleman as left it."

"Who was that, Maggie?"

"Mr. Jinn, as you know of."

"Why, Maggie, I thought you said he was a drunken lunatic."

"The saints forgive me. He's a precious jintleman as ever I seen."

"Why, what changed your opinion so suddenly, Maggie?"

"It's not suddint at all, Mr. Thomas. I've been thinking for some time I've been doing him an injustice, and now I'm sure of it, he was so very polite and neat-spoken to me."

"When do you mean, Maggie—just now?"

"Now in particular," said Maggie, "but other times in general. He's never give me any particular trouble. I was only afraid of the bother to your mother and you."

"What did he do just now?" I inquired.

"He gave me the note for you, and asked me to give it to you, just as polite like. It was as if he was a jintleman a-speakin' to a real lady. He was real kind-spoken like."

"Was that all, Maggie?"

"That was all as I can think of."

"Did he give you anything to make you change your opinion of him?" I asked, bluntly.

"Would I be apt to take anything from the likes of him?" said Maggie, evading the question by asking another.

I did not think it worth while to answer Maggie's question. I knew enough to know that I should have no further trouble between Jinn and Maggie,

and that Jinn could now get to me whenever I chose to call him. As he was not waiting, I sent no message. Maggie was rattled.

"Why don't you open the box?" asked Maggie, still lingering.

"What box?" I asked.

"Bless me!" said she, "I was so flurried I must have dropped it. He left a box for you, too—a small affair."

"Maggie," I said, "I bet I know what's the matter with you. Jinn must have kissed you."

Maggie was so horrified that she bounced out of the room, as red as a beet. When she returned with a small package, which she had dropped on the stairs in her hurry, she said:

"I hope I know my place better than to be kissing any gentleman that may be calling at this house; I'd die first." To prevent further inquiry, she retired as soon as she made this remark.

I opened the package at once. Within was a velvet case, and in that a glorious gold time-piece. I touched a spring and a little silvery-toned bell struck nine, then on another smaller bell, the first quarter. It was just a little past the quarter after nine o'clock.

"A repeater, sure enough," I exclaimed aloud. Then I examined it more closely. I touched the



spring again, and it struck the same as before. There was a light hand going around the whole dial in little jerks, which I recognized as the quarter-second hand. There were several other hands and contrivances. I pressed another spring, and immediately the jerky hand stopped. I released it, it went on again like the others.

"A stop-watch," I remarked. This reminded me of the medicine, which Jinn had left on the bed, the bottle neatly wrapped up. I was so taken up with the watch, that I was lying there, doing nothing, when by taking the medicine I might be out of bed in two hours. There were several glasses and spoons on a table by the bed, which mother had left. I poured out a spoonful of the medicine. It was a syrupy liquid, not bad smelling. I got the watch ready. It was now just thirty-one minutes after nine o'clock. As the second hand went around the next revolution, I got the spoon ready, and just as it touched the sixty mark, making it thirty-two minutes, I swallowed the mixture. It did not taste badly either. I rather wished the dose had been larger. The directions said to take a teaspoonful every half hour. That would make the next dose at two minutes past ten o'clock.

The pain and fever were pretty bad at this time.

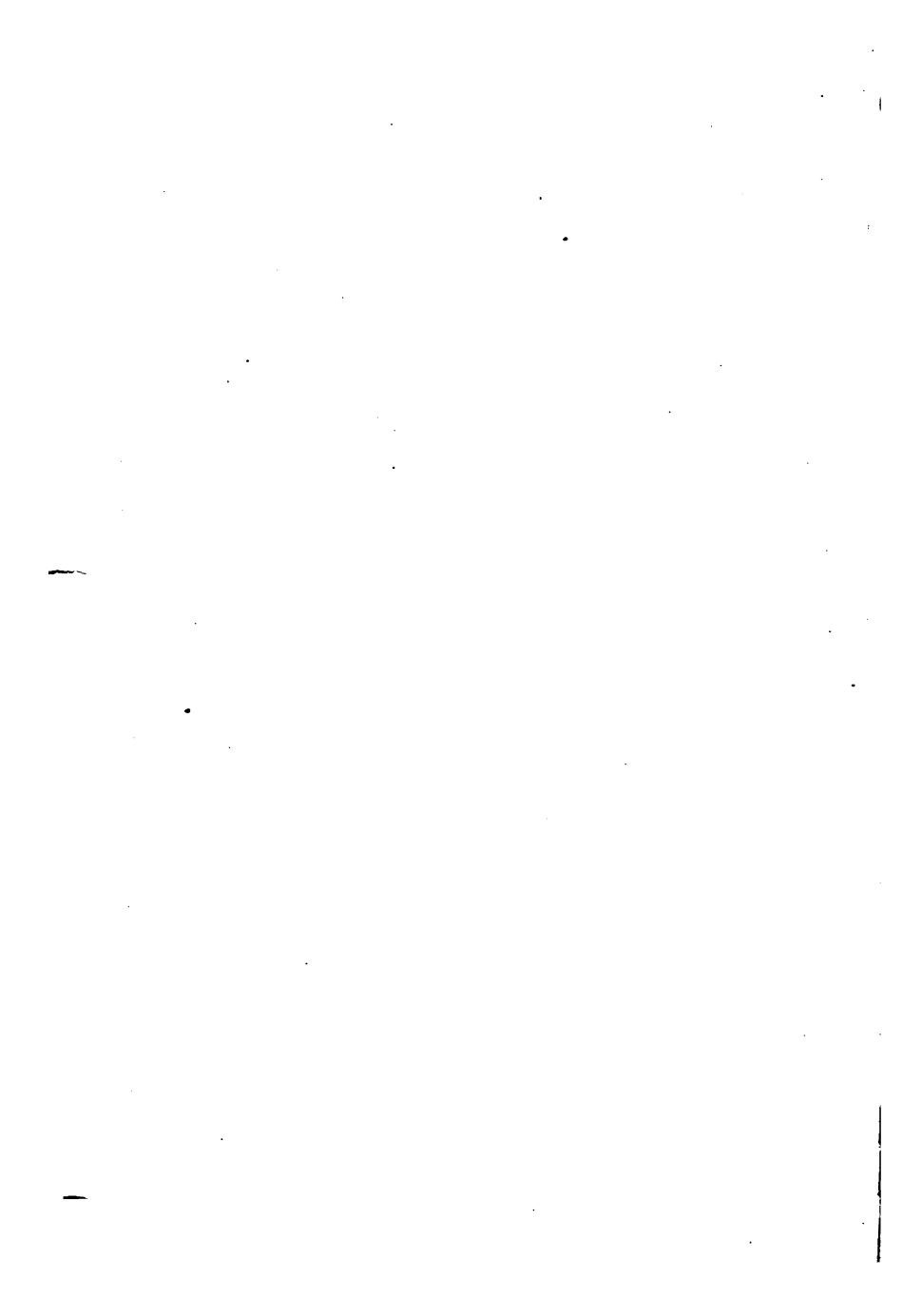
They seemed to have been aggravated by the excitement. I wished the two hours were up. In the mean-time I had nothing to do but think. I disliked the bother of thinking, but it seemed to be necessary just then. What worried me was, how I was to arrange it with mother. I would want her to know about the "bike." It would be very inconvenient to always keep it from her. Now the possession of the watch had to be explained also, or I should always have to be on my guard not to mention it. Maggie would be sure to see it, and she would tell mother, if I did not. There was nothing to do but make a clean breast of it, so I lay there and thought how it had best be done.

It was certain that mother would not believe a word, if I told her the true facts about the lamp. That was out of the question. I could not work off any yarns about recently discovered wealthy relatives. She was too well-posted for that. If I could not show a clear title to the articles, or even show that they properly belonged to whoever had given them to me, she would make a fuss.

While I was racking my brains for a solution of the problem, I looked at the watch. It was just ten o'clock. I wanted to be very exact as to the different times for the doses, so that there would be no shadow



She appeared to recognize the sound.— p. 76.



of an excuse for a failure. I got the spoonful ready, and exactly at the second of two minutes after, swallowed it. It did not appear to help the pain much. If anything, I felt worse. I began to think that the whole thing was a fraud, but I recollected that it would not take very long to find out definitely just what the medicine was worth.

The worry of the pain, and of the problem before me, was more than I cared to have at one time, but I could not keep the question out of my mind, any more than I could stop the pain. Under the circumstances, no one could blame me for bearing both, though not very bravely, I admit.

As far as the watch was concerned, I could tell mother that I had found it; but that excuse would not cover the bicycle, to say nothing of its glass case. I wanted something that would cover everything in time to come, and include the possession of money, as my five dollars reminded me. The lost-and-found racket, even for money, would not go down if too frequently repeated. With all my thinking I could hit upon no plan that seemed satisfactory.

At thirty-two minutes past ten and two minutes past eleven exactly, I repeated the dose, feeling just as bad, if not worse, at every application. I managed to stand it by reflecting that now there was but

a half-hour before it would probably be over. It was a mighty mean half-hour, but it finally came to a close. At thirty-two minutes past I took the last spoonful. At that time I was in excruciating agony, but I watched the hands on the dial closely. I did not get better, but felt still worse. I waited one whole minute more, with the watch before me, then two. The second hand went entirely around five times while I watched it, after the time when the pain should have stopped. It was unbearable. I got out the lamp and prepared to summon Jinn to inquire about it. The only thing that prevented me was that I knew he would be testy if I repeated an order that had once been given and registered. I set the lamp down on the table rather crossly, and in so doing upset the bottle of medicine. As I supposed that I was done with it, I took no care of what remained on the table, and had not even re-corked it. The liquid ran out slowly, and a small stream of it began to trickle down the table-leg. I was too sick to care to stop it, but watched it.

“By George!” I thought, “that sticky stuff runs slow. I wonder how long it took to get down my throat. It should have been timed from the moment the first drop reached the bottom of my stomach, not from when I took it; but how was I to tell that?”

Taking my watch, I timed the motion of the drop on the table-leg. I carried a little pocket tape-measure, which had belonged to father when he was in the tailoring business. I timed the drop for just sixty seconds from a pencil mark that I made at the beginning of that interval, to another which I made at the end of it. This distance, I found to be just two inches. I then put one end of the tape-measure in my teeth and laid it along the under side of my jaw, down the front of my throat and breast, to about opposite the point where I felt the worst pain, which I took to be my stomach. I measured a little full, so as to approximate the neighborhood of the bottom of the stomach. As near as I could get at it, the distance was seventeen inches. That would mean eight and a half minutes after the medicine first entered the mouth. The watch now said twenty minutes of twelve, just eight minutes after the two hours, as I first calculated it. I watched it for thirty seconds longer. Just as the hand touched the thirty second mark I felt the pain giving way, all at once. My head stopped aching, my dizziness had gone, there was no neuralgic or rheumatic pain anywhere. Thanking my lucky stars, I got up at once and dressed. The first thing I did was to lock up the lamp again, and with it the watch, until I could think of a good excuse to give mother.

## CHAPTER XII.

## PLEASE EXCUSE THOMAS.

WHEN I went downstairs, mother was delighted to see me. She had been so busy, she said, that she had not had time to get to my room that morning. I told her that my friend, Jinn's master, hearing that I was sick, had sent some medicine, and it had helped me at once in a wonderful manner.

"That man Jinn's a jintleman, if there ever was one," remarked Maggie, who overheard me.

I was able to go out the same day and to eat as usual. It was too late for school, but I started in again there the next morning.

It was very apparent that things could not continue as they were. Mother must be informed, but for the life of me I could not think what to tell her. In this extremity I sincerely wished for a friend to advise, some one whom I could tell of the whole thing. The only suitable person I could think of was mother herself, but I could not bring myself to make a clean



breast to her. I knew her too well. She would say that I should not avail myself of anything gained in that way, without being honestly worked for or paid for. Just then I thought of Jinn.

"I wonder if he will give advice. I did not think he could help me in sickness, but he did. If it was any definite thing I needed, I know he could bring it, but I do not know whether he could accomplish an abstract thing like changing mother's opinion. He might probably give advice."

I went to my room again, on the plea of not feeling quite well yet, and summoned Jinn. When he entered, I did not speak at once, thinking how to put the matter. He began :

"What do you wish? I am ready to——"

"Oh, dry up, Jinn," I interrupted. "You've already said all that downstairs, to Maggie. Give me a moment, will you?"

"You shouldn't call me before you are ready," said Jinn.

"Jinn, I want to ask a question. Are you allowed to give advice?"

"If I'm asked, yes," he replied. "But I'm not allowed to guarantee it."

"I noticed, Jinn, that your advice about medicine was A 1."

"It usually is. We have facilities for information, but we're not responsible if it don't work properly."

"Jinn, I want you to influence mother to let me have the things you have brought. I want you to make her think it is all right."

"That's not in our line," said Jinn. "If you want any material thing in reason, I can accommodate you, probably, though I won't say positively; but what you ask for now is something entirely different. Formerly I could have said that I could bring you anything under the sun, if material, and in any quantity, but times have changed since Aladdin's time. There has been so much extravagance. Then we thought nothing of serving up each meal on a brand-new set of solid silver, and we didn't care what became of it afterwards. You could pawn it, sell it, give it or throw it away, as you liked. We had plenty more. Then we didn't object to serving up forty solid gold basins, each full of pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, each stone as big as a Bartlett pear; but we can't do that now. We can't stand it. Besides, the jewelry trade complain to the government. We'd get mixed up in a boycott, or legislation would be directed at us. It can't be done. There's no use talking. We got so low from such extravagance that

... had to go into the hands of a syndicate. The syndicate has more strict regulations. It was necessary to reduce expenses. They kept the same working-force. We were always short-handed."

"Then you see no way out of this difficulty with mother?" I asked.

"I did not say so," said Jinn.

"Well, why in the dickens don't you say, then, what you can do?"

"It is for you to ask and me to answer."

"Is there anything material that you could bring me that would settle the matter with mother?"

"There is," said Jinn.

"Why don't you bring it to me, then?"

"You haven't asked for it."

"How can I tell what to ask for?"

"Use your brains, if you have any."

"Jinn, you're exasperating. Are you allowed to answer a direct question if I ask you what that thing is?"

"Certainly."

"Then what thing is it, that you can bring me, that will satisfy mother?"

"An excuse," said Jinn.

"An excuse?"

"Yes, a written excuse."

"Can you bring one, Jinn, that will be satisfactory?"

"Certainly."

"Well, Jinn, I wish to goodness you'd bring it, then."

"It shall be done, as soon as I have the facts."

"Get them, Jinn, as soon as possible."

Instead of getting out, as usual, as soon as possible after I gave the order, Jinn leaned against the window, took off his cap, scratched his head a little, and proceeded to catechise me thus:

"Have you ever done any one a good deed, Mr. Thomas?"

"Not that I remember," I replied.

"Have you ever stopped a runaway horse with any one in the wagon?"

"Never."

"Ever signaled a railway train when there was an obstruction on the track?"

"Never."

"Have you ever given warning of a contemplated burglary?"

"Never."

"Have you ever saved any one from drowning?"

"Never."

"Did any one ever see you pick up a pin?"

"They couldn't. I never picked up one. Don't use 'em."

"Then there's no one likely to leave you money. You're a hard case to handle," said Jinn. "Who's your mother's lawyer?" he commenced again.

"She has none that I know of."

"Had your father a lawyer?"

"Never heard of any."

"Did he never have any bad debts?"

"He never had any other kind that I ever heard of."

"Who ever tried to collect them?"

"Excuse me a minute. I will ask mother."

"Mother," I said, on entering her room, "did father have a collector, or had he dealings with any firm of collectors?"

"Yes, Thomas, he did; but why do you ask?"

"I do not know, mother, not yet. There has been somebody inquiring about me, Jinn says."

"Was it Sharp & Allofamind?"

"I think that must have been the name. Jinn couldn't quite catch it?"

"That was the firm your father dealt with," remarked mother.

I hurried up to Jinn with the information thus gathered.

"I know the firm," said Jinn. "Now I can act Is there anything——?"

"No, Jinn, not at present." He was gone. I had forgotten to ask him about the gold chain. It would be necessary to make a memorandum of what I should ask before calling him another time. I had intended also to ask him about some more good eating. I noticed while I was sick, though I did not eat very much, that the meals were decidedly shaky again. Mother never would spend enough for eating.

That afternoon a gentleman called at the house, asked for mother, and sent up his card. It read :

E. J. BOOKER, ESQ.  
WITH SHARP & ALLOFAMIND,  
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW.

Mother showed me the card.

"That must have been the firm that was inquiring about me," I remarked.

Mother went down into the parlor. I listened at the head of the stairs.

"Madam," began Mr. Booker, "you have a son, Thomas, I believe?"

"I have," said mother.

"Will you read this document?" he went on, producing a lengthy legal paper. It read thus:

“DEAR MADAM :—

“We have been called upon by the representatives of a certain party who wishes to remain unknown. Our correspondent’s principal intimates that he was indebted to your husband in certain amounts, which he unjustly withheld by means of false representations. Having come to believe that such course is immoral and unchristian, he wishes to make amends to the best of his ability, to ease his troubled conscience. He therefore desires me to inform you that he has deposited with us certain monies, the income of which will be applied, as he may direct, to the needs of your son Thomas. We are particularly requested to say that it will not be necessary for you to call upon us for further information, as we are forbidden to give it. In the event of any pressure to that end, the principal-money will be withdrawn, and your son will have no further use of it. We are also requested to say that our client is a peculiar person, and that you need feel no surprise at any form in which this benefit may appear. In any event, it will be a clear gain to your son, and indirectly to you of course. It is possible that it may take the form of luxuries rather than more substantial aid, as our client has himself gone through deprivations in youth, and knows how hard they are to bear. If we happen to hear of any personal wish of your son’s, it will probably be granted, if within the limit of the funds available at the time. We have inquired who your son’s associates are, in order to find some one whom

we could use in transferring these donations; some one who is familiar with your son's wants. We have been recommended to a Mr. — Jinn, about whom we have made exhaustive inquiries, and find him reliable in every way.

“We may add that a certain banquet served at your house by means of this same Jinn was the result of this arrangement, which your son will now fully appreciate for the first time. He has also been made the owner of a certain bicycle, to which he had taken a fancy, which he will find stored at Janson's stables. We have also sent him by Mr. Jinn a repeater gold watch, which he will probably receive to-day, and a small amount of ready money. We are sorry by the terms of the trust that we cannot include you in its benefits, or present articles of more general utility to all persons in the household.

“Yours truly,

“SHARP & ALLOFAMIND,

“Attorneys for Trust.”



### CHAPTER XIII.

*IF YOU DON'T SEE WHAT YOU WANT, ASK FOR IT.*

"Is the matter satisfactory?" asked Mr. Booker of mother, after she had read the letter.

"Quite so," said mother; "and it relieves my mind of a great weight. I could not understand what has been going on here lately. I was afraid there was something wrong."

"I have the honor to bid you good-day, then, madam," said Mr. Booker.

"Good-day, sir," said mother.

Of course, when mother acquainted me formally with the particulars of the interview, I was delighted. I said I would step around to the stable at once to see the wheel.

As might be expected, Jinn came, at my request, as soon as I reached my room again.

"Jinn, you're a brick!" I exclaimed. "How did you fix it all so nicely? How could you think of such things?"

"We have the best available talent in all departments," said Jinn. "It is the cheapest in the end. We take only the best advice."

"Did you actually deposit money at Sharp & All-ofamind's, Jinn?"

"Of course—else how could they say so?"

"How much was it, Jinn?"

"That's none of your business," said Jinn, abruptly. "It's against regulations to give away our business. It's enough to cover everything so far as the excuse to your mother is concerned, whether it comes from them or whether I bring it myself. She don't know how much of it comes from them."

"Oh, say, Jinn, I forgot to ask you something. Was there no chain came with that watch?"

"You did not ask for any."

"Would you bring one if I did?"

"There's nothing like asking for what you want, if you don't see it, particularly if you're hoggish."

"Thank you, Jinn. Just bring me one, then. A good one, but not too flashy. And, Jinn, I forgot something. You know the provisions in this house are getting rather ropey."

"Do you want provisions served?"

"If you please," I said.

"You can't have that without including your mother."

"I don't mind that, if it don't interfere with anything else that I want. Besides, it saves me trouble. I won't have to do any errands for mother."

"Well, what do you want?" asked Jinn.

"Oh, anything. It need not be extravagant. Can you serve bread, and milk, and butter, and such things, regularly?" I asked.

"I can have it done," said Jinn.

"And you might add ice and coal. The coal's always out. Mother's always making a fuss about it. She stops the ice in winter. I like it all the year round. And groceries—how about them?"

"Anything reasonable. What, for instance?" asked Jinn.

"Oh, everything they have to have to make things taste good. Allspice and cloves and cinnamon, I suppose."

"How about canned goods, and flour, and eggs, and sugar, and rice, and coffee, and tea?"

"Oh, yes, anything to eat."

"How about anything not to eat, like soap, and starch, and clothes-pins, and candles, and brooms, and buckets, and brushes?"

"I've nothing to do with them," I said. I was

afraid I'd run beyond the regulations and have to do without something that I might want myself.

"You wouldn't be comfortable without them. Your mother couldn't, anyhow, and if she isn't, you couldn't be. You're in the same house."

"Then I suppose we'd better have them," I admitted.

"How about marketing, vegetables, poultry, meat, and fruits?" asked Jinn.

"Yes, let's have some of them. You know what's good. Make the chickens tender, for sometimes, when mother's ill, I have to carve. When she's sick I always beg for hash, though I don't like it. It's easy to carve. And, Jinn, have ice-cream about three times a week. Would like it oftener, but I don't want to get tired of it. And you might have meringues or macaroons. Don't bring sponge-cake. That takes too long to chew. And plenty of candy. Always have some in the house. And some nuts and raisins."

"Is there anything else to-day?" began Jinn.

"Is there anything else, Jinn, that a house needs, to be comfortable? You needn't bring great lots of things. About what we want, you know. No banquets. They're tiresome for long."

"You've covered the ground, I think," said Jinn.

"Then there's nothing else at present."

I showed mother the watch, and told her there was a chain coming. I also told her that provisions would be sent regularly, that she needn't worry about eating for a while.

Sure enough, the dealers, the best in the city, began to drive up and leave various articles, until Maggie was crazy over Jinn's "jintlemanliness," and mother was blessing me as the cause of it all. We had almost everything we wanted. Coal was put into the cellar, ice in the refrigerator, and provisions everywhere. I found I had made a balk again. I had forgotten kindling-wood. Mother would insist that I should chop kindling, out of any old lumber that we could gather about the house. It was awfully tiresome. If Maggie wouldn't do it, I thought mother might have stopped sewing long enough to attend to that without bothering me. It was no boy's work. I determined that I would not get caught again in that way, so I got out a little memorandum book that I now carried and wrote:

"Jinn. Bring split kindling-wood."

It was getting too trying to remember so many things.

But after the excitement of the day was over, I could not but think of something which was very annoying.

I had been absent now from school for several weeks, and my studies were behindhand. This would not have been of so much moment, as I had the excuse of sickness, but the fact was that I was greatly behind before I was taken sick. I did not understand what I had been over before. It was such a beastly grind, you know. Every day it got worse, and I did not know how to get out of it. I did not like to go back in my studies, for I should have had to go to the very start. It would have been beginning all my schooling afresh. Perhaps I could persuade mother to let me leave school. But, come to think of it, I supposed it would be better for me to have more education. I did not want to be inferior to everybody else. I wished that education was a material thing that I could order Jinn to bring me. But perhaps he could help me in some way. His advice was first-class, so far. I would ask him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*A SNAP-SHOT.*

WHEN I put the question to Jinn about the schooling, he had to consider a while. It was so important a matter to me that I forgot the list I was making, and so again did not ask for the kindling-wood.

Jinn had been called early in the morning, before I went to school. He brought the chain with him. I don't know what occasioned the delay. Possibly it had to be made to order. After I had admired it, I put the question to him :

"Is there anything that you can bring me that will help me to get along at school?"

"There is," said Jinn.

"Please be so kind as to tell me what it is that you can bring me, that will help me to get along at school," I ordered, knowing that I must put it directly to get advice.

"A tutor," said Jinn.

"A tutor!" I repeated. "That means hard work for me out of school-hours to catch up."

"It does," said Jinn.

"Then a tutor don't suit me. Is there nothing else that you can do?"

"There is," said Jinn.

"Please to communicate it."

"I can find what the lessons will be, and furnish you with copies of written tasks, which you can copy in your own hand."

"That will be some trouble, won't it?" I asked.

"It will be, certainly."

"How about oral work, Jinn?"

"I can find just what questions will come to your lot, and furnish you with written answers which you can memorize. You need not bother with the rest of the lesson nor with previous work."

"But I will have to learn those particular answers. Can't you find an easier way? Can you furnish me the written work in my handwriting?"

Jinn looked at me in a peculiar way.

"You beat Aladdin all hollow, and he was rather free in ordering," said Jinn finally.

"Aladdin would be old-fogy to-day," I urged.

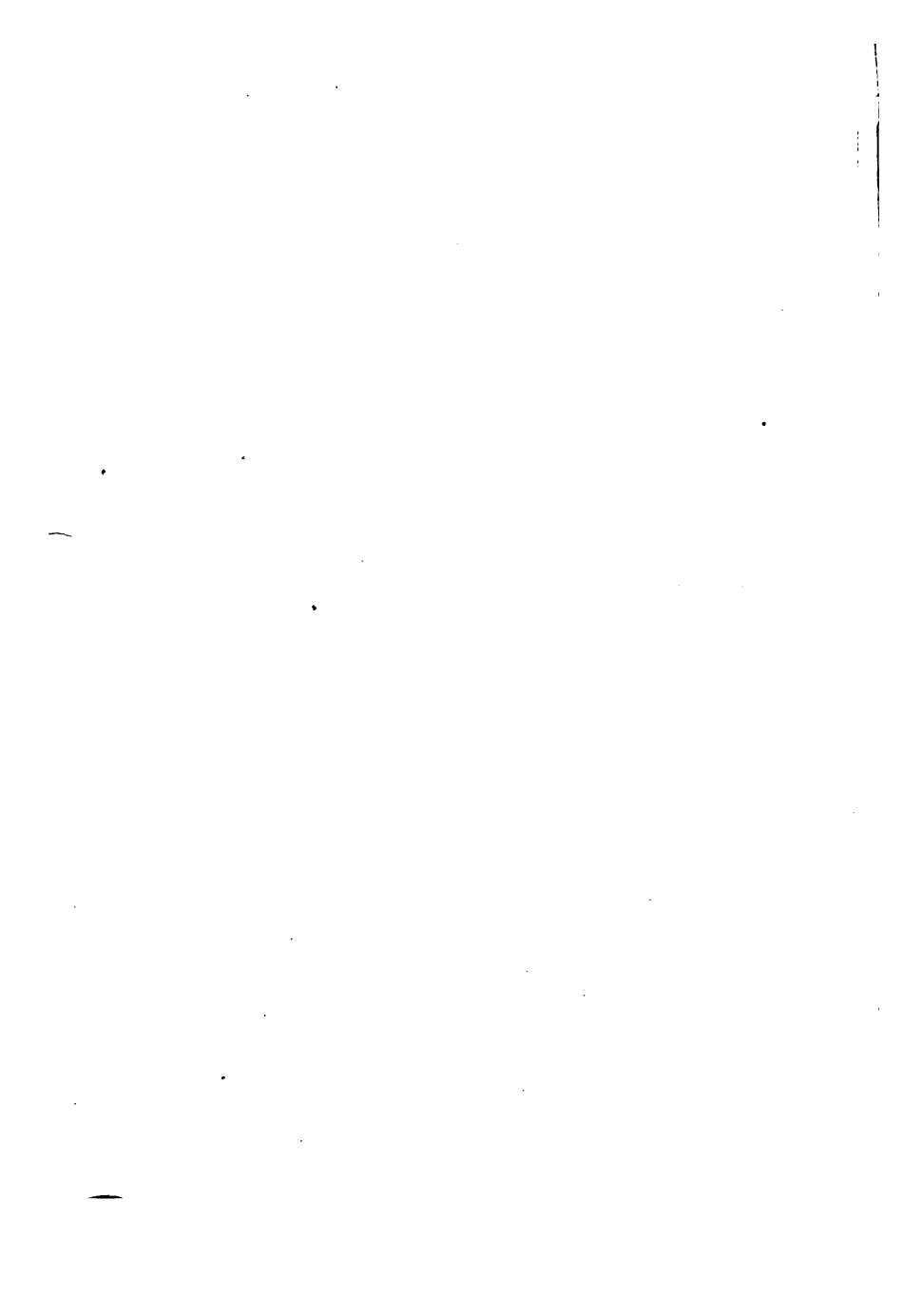
"You've got to keep up to date."

"I think," said Jinn, "that we can accommodate





“Great Scott! if it isn’t Stringer!”—p. 96.



you, if you want it that way, though it's a poor way in my estimation. I say this personally because I cannot help it, not in my professional capacity, as an expert of the lamp syndicate. We have one or two office-boys that write like you do—as poorly—and any one would think their writing was yours. But you will have to learn your oral answers, except when you use a book, then I can have the answers written in that. If you want excuses, I can have as many of them written as you want, or as the head-master will stand.”

As this was the best he could do, I had to be content.

This arrangement was very satisfactory, for a time, until one day when I made a mistake. I did not wonder, for it was a fearful bother. We had an examination in English history. There were to have been four questions for my share. From some cause I overlooked the first one on the list which Jinn had furnished me, and did not learn it. I gave the second answer to the first question, and so got the answers wrong all the way down the line. The mistake was so peculiar that I have never forgotten it.

The first question was, “Whom did Henry the Eighth marry?”

I answered, "Queen Elizabeth."

The boys looked surprised. Master waited a while, to see if I would correct myself. As I was certain that I was right, master wrote it down, question and answer, so as to show it to me afterwards.

When it came to my turn again the query was, "In whose reign did Shakespeare live?"

I answered, "Queen Victoria's."

He wrote that down also.

At the next trial I was asked who was the last queen of England. The master remarked that my last answer might fit now, but I didn't quite catch what he said.

I said, "Christopher Columbus," which he noted.

When the next turn came the master seemed quite surprised to find that the question "Who discovered America?" came to me, but asked it.

I then discovered that I did not have enough answers to the questions and could not tell him. The master looked at his paper. The way the questions and answers stood rather puzzled him. By transposing he could get the correct answers to three questions. He suspected something.

I would have given up the system, because it was liable to such errors. It took too much watching to

keep things straight, but I could think of nothing better. The written work was all right, except it was too correct. I had to make some mistakes in it sometimes, because it was too good for mine. Master would think I had stolen it.

You may be sure that I enjoyed the watch and bicycle immensely. There was only one thing more that I wanted particularly, for I had now remembered the kindling-wood, and that was a good photographic camera. I had become interested in one owned by a school-fellow. He said if I would get one, he would teach me to use it.

When I ordered it, Jinn brought me an elegant affair, with all chemicals and appliances. I had a dark room fitted up in a spare corner of the stable, which Jinn hired. I thought it was splendid fun at first. I liked to watch the pictures developing in the tray, but it got to be a bore before long.

In taking a picture, you had to set your tripod, level your camera, get the focus, and expose for the correct length of time. The developing became monotonous also. There was such a fooling with bottles, and messing, and washing. It got to be a regular nuisance. I told Jinn that I wanted a touch-the-button affair, and that I wanted him to do the rest. If he would bring me one of the kind of

snap-shots that would fasten to the front of the bicycle, I should like it best of all. When I made any pictures I should leave the camera in a certain place, when I expected him to have the plates developed, and to furnish me with as many prints as I might direct. This Jinn agreed to do, and a new camera came home the same night, fully charged.

This made splendid amusement for a while, but I soon got tired of looking at the ordinary pictures which I made. There got to be so many that I did not know what to do with them. For variety I soon began to find new uses for the camera. I hit upon a very enjoyable expedient.

When out with the bicycle and camera, I fell into the habit of catching every one I could, particularly school-girls or young ladies. I found that if I happened to get a good picture of some handsome girl, without her leave, it was a saleable article. The other boys offered to buy copies. I found that it was an easy way of making money, particularly as nearly all the work was done for me. As it was necessary, I supposed, to be looking after some way of earning a living, this was about as good as any. I made some lucky snap-shots in this way.

There are certain actions, innocent and proper in themselves, which every one has to do at times, but

which it is not usually desirable should be dwelt upon or particularly noticed. One of these I happened to witness.

A certain young lady of whom I knew, but of whom I was not a speaking acquaintance, as she belonged to one of the most wealthy families in the city, was coming home from her fashionable school with some friends just as I happened to be leaving mine. I happened to have my bicycle and camera with me.

The young lady was richly dressed, had on delicately-colored kid gloves, an elegant hat, though she had only been to school. That was her ordinary wearing-apparel. Unfortunately, this young lady was hungry. We were on a street which was not exactly fashionable, though a prominent one. As she passed a banana stand, she could not resist the temptation to purchase some fruit, which she divided with the other girls. She had skinned one without taking off her gloves, and was just about to eat it when I caught sight of her. At the same instant she looked up and saw me. I do not suppose she even knew who I was, but she looked sheepish at being caught at a disadvantage. She hastily crammed the piece of banana into her mouth and tried to shut it. It was no go. The piece of banana was of superior size to the re-

ceptacle. Just at this moment, as she was in range of my camera, I touched the button. I do not think she knew what I had done, but she turned scarlet as I looked at her. The success of this picture was immense.



## CHAPTER XV.

## CAN SCHOOL-MASTERS EXPLODE?

NEARLY all the fellows in our school, which was mostly patronized by wealthy people, knew the young lady whom I had photographed. When I showed copies of the picture, the demand for them exceeded the supply. I ordered a hundred or more and easily got rid of them.

You would have laughed yourself if you could have seen it. The elegant young lady, so nicely dressed, was trying hard to cover the banana with her lips. Her eyes were bulging in the effort. Her hand was just leaving her mouth. The strangest part of the picture was that it did not vulgarize her at all. She was bewitchingly pretty. The unfortunate position she was caught in, did not at all detract from her beauty, but made her perfectly irresistible. After I had disposed of a great number of the pictures, I began to feel the charm of the handsome face in distress, to such a degree that I became jealous of

the other boys to whom I had sold pictures. I was sorry I had sold them. I wanted to keep them all to myself. They were too good to give away. They were as if some one had sent me a very superior cake, which I enjoyed so much that I could not bring myself to part with any of it. We got into several rows over the pictures. The boys laughed at me and commenced to make fun, which was ridiculous; seeing that she was so far above me in social standing. She would no more have noticed me than she would her father's coachman, in fact, not so much. She might have preferred a coachman.

The camera made another lucky hit soon afterwards. I had tired of having it on the bicycle, so had rigged up a little arrangement of my own, which made it possible to carry it at any time unobserved. The usual custom under such circumstances is to wrap the camera in paper, and put it in a strap, cutting a little hole for the lens; but one does not always want a paper bundle. My improvement was much superior.

At a second-hand book-shop I selected three books of no particular value, the size of which when together was slightly larger than the camera. I tore off the outer covers of two of these as they were placed in the package, and then took the remaining

portions to a printer and got him to put them in his paper-cutting machine. He did not like to cut the books, with the remaining stiff covers on them, on the machine; saying that the hard tar-board in the covers would dull the knife. I told him that I would make that all right in the payment, when he consented. I got him to put the package of books, without the two outer covers but with the four remaining inside covers, under the clamp, with the upper edges projecting about half an inch. When the knife was brought down, I had the upper edges of covers and leaves exactly as the books had looked at that end, but only a half inch in thickness. These pieces I gathered up carefully, without disturbing their arrangement, and wrapped them up. We afterward did the same with the bottom edges of the package, and also the front edges, which included the curved front of the leaves where they opened. Another cut took off the backs neatly. After these were all neatly wrapped in separate packages, we threw away the remaining cube of paper, which had been the interior of the package. It was about the size of a cigar-box.

When I reached home, I took the camera, found some strong glue, fitted the separate book-cuttings, of top and bottom edges and backs, on to the camera;

the size of which I had taken accurately and allowed for in selecting the books, and in measuring the thickness of the cut pieces.

After these parts were all in place, a hole made in the top edges for the lens and another for the sight in the backs, I took the two outside covers, which I had removed entire before taking the package of books to be cut, and fastened them on to the sides of the reconstructed package. They were found to fit exactly. After cutting a hole in one cover for the button the package was complete. The cuts were joined neatly. To all appearances, it was a package of three books, just as it had been before. The only difference was that it had a camera inside of it. By adding a carrying strap, I could appear to be on the way to or from school or the library.

The new camera-case was completed when it was getting towards winter. I took it to school with me one day and stood it on my desk, which happened to face the master. I amused myself, as he was exactly in range, by taking several shots at him in various attitudes. The school-room was very light. It had many large, clear, glass windows and white walls, and was well adapted for quick exposures.

The room was heated from one end by a large, round sheet-iron stove, one of the kind that have a little

ornamental iron railing of open work around the top. There was a class at recitation, drawn up in front of the head-master, on a long row of benches, one end of which was near the stove. The master's desk was about opposite the center of the line.

There was one lazy, good-for-nothing fellow in the school whose desk was near the stove. He was always up to some trick or other which no one could help laughing at. This boy had brought a package of red pepper to school that day, and while this class was reciting, he threw it so that it landed on top of the stove. The stove was moderately warm. The package lay there for a time, without attracting attention. Pretty soon the white paper began to blacken and the pepper gave off a thin smoke, which no one noticed at the time. It gradually crept around the room.

This trick is a dangerous one to perform, for it sometimes leads to serious consequences. It produces violent sneezing, which, if the fit is severe, it is sometimes impossible to stop. People have been seriously injured internally by it. Fortunately, on this occasion, the room was large and well-aired.

The fumes of the pepper reached the end boy of the reciting class first, as he was nearest to it. He gave a violent sneeze like a pistol-shot, which made

the whole school ring, and disturbed every one. He not only sneezed, but he bent his body, and brought his feet down on the floor with a bang at the moment of the explosion. The master was scandalized at such conduct in the quiet school-room. He glared at the boy, too horrified to ask an explanation. After he recovered himself he simply said, "Ten demerits." This was sufficient to ruin the boy's standing for the whole term.

The boy rose to explain. Just then the fumes reached the head-master himself. He gave a tremendous explosion, ten times louder than the boy, and stamped his feet in the same way the boy had done. The whole school looked up and roared. The master saw how it was. The sneezing then became general, and we had a fine time for a while. We threw open the windows. The boy who had done the mischief had asked permission to go out of the room as soon as he threw the package, so that the blame could not rest upon him. The master said that he would investigate later. The demerits were canceled.

I would not have had presence of mind enough to have taken a shot at the master with the camera purposely, just at the instant when he was sneezing, but luck would have it that just at that time I had been in the act of taking one anyhow. I caught him just

as the sneeze was going off. When I got the print I found it the most funny thing you could well imagine. The familiar face appeared with the mouth wide open, the eyes shut, the nose screwed up in a way that I am sure no one would care to have perpetuated in a photograph. The picture was irresistible. The boys all howled when they saw it. Every boy in the school bought one. I could not furnish them fast enough. It was a great hit. I netted about seventy-five dollars. Twenty-five cents was about all the boys could pay, but I sold three hundred of them.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## PLEASE INTRODUCE ME.

THERE was another lucky hit soon after. Mother always insisted that I should attend church with her regularly, at a fashionable church where father had belonged. We had been obliged to move our seats to the gallery after his death, but we were in the front row. I used to get tired of the services, as I did of most things, not because I disapproved of them, but because I was made that way. Most things tired me. It was not my fault. To ease this monotony I carried the camera to church one Sunday, took off the carrying strap, and stood the three books, backs up, on the front of the gallery. Mother may have wondered what I had brought the books for, but she said nothing. She might have spoken had she seen me attempt to open them, but they remained undisturbed all the service. During the sermon I took a shot with them. Right in line was an old, well-to-do



gentleman with a bald head, who was asleep. His head was nodding backwards. When he got to the furthest limit possible, I touched the button. This moment was just between two sentences of the sermon and the church was as still as the grave. The click of the spring made a perceptible noise. Mother noticed it and looked at me, but by that time I was clear of the camera and back in my place. Mother moved slowly.

But the noise was noticed by another in the congregation. A handsome young lady, alongside of the old gentleman whom I had photographed, looked up at me. She must have done some photographing herself, for she appeared to recognize the sound. She recognized me, too, and I her. It was Miss Golden, the young lady whom I had caught with the banana. Then I knew who the old gentleman must be. I had not known him by sight before, though I knew all about him. He was Mr. Golden, one of the wealthiest men in town, and the president of the Great American Railway System.

I was certain that the girl knew enough about snapshots to appreciate that I had caught her father. She was restless during the whole remaining portion of the service, and glanced up at me frequently, not too well pleased, I imagined.

Two or three days after this event, I entered the school-room one morning, when I saw that there was something unusual the matter. The master had been speaking, though the exercises had not yet commenced. Every one looked at me as I entered. The room was unusually quiet.

As soon as I reached my desk, the master called me by name. I glanced up, and saw that he held in his hand one of the photographs of himself which I had taken—the sneezing photograph.

“Did you make this, Thomas?” he demanded. He had asked the same question of every boy as they entered.

I supposed there was no use to deny, so I said that I had, and smiled at the idea, for the picture was funny.

He did not change a muscle. I had reason afterwards to suppose that he suspected me of the pepper trick itself, which caused the unfortunate sneeze, though he did not say so; he had no proof. He had the suspicious answers to my history examination in his noddle, at any rate, and I do not think he liked my good standing in written work. It was too good for me.

“Thomas,” he said, “I do not think that we have room for you in this school any longer.”

"Do you mean to say that I am expelled?" I demanded.

"I did not say so," he returned, "I said we had not room for you." He was evidently in a bad humor. There was plenty of room in the school for anybody else. I could see that. Perhaps he wanted to put it in that form, so that I could tell mother in that way. He did not want to hurt mother's feelings by expelling me. He had often spoken as if he pitied my mother for being a widow. I didn't know why he should. I knew he had once told her she could not afford to send me to that school. Perhaps he expelled me to relieve her of the expense. It wasn't worth her while to send me, that was certain.

"Am I to come to-morrow?" I asked.

"Not to-morrow."

"Not at all?"

"Not at all," said the master.

This was good news. I was glad of it. That would relieve me of all this bother of bringing in the papers from Jinn, for no use at all, so far as I was concerned; and of learning his answers to the questions which I did not understand any better after I had learned than before. Mother would be sorry, of course. I did not tell her for some days. She did not inquire, and did not notice my goings and

comings particularly. She trusted me, and was too busy to watch me. She need not have been so busy, for all her living was now provided. She said she still had the interest on the mortgage to pay, me to educate, and both of us to clothe. I did not want to tell her that I was expelled until I had a consultation with Jinn. He might put me in the way of how to do it, or at least furnish an excuse.

Jinn was called up.

"Jinn," I said, "what's the use of an education anyhow?"

"No use to some people," said Jinn. "It's a waste of money."

"I wish mother would think so," I said. "You can't make her think so, can you?"

"That's beyond me," said Jinn.

"Will I ever need an education, Jinn?"

"If you can't keep the lease on the lamp," said Jinn.

"If I can, Jinn?"

"Then I may help you out whenever you need it."

"Could you, Jinn, get me any position I might want?"

"Well, not exactly," said Jinn.

"You couldn't make me president of the United States?" I inquired, jocularly.

"With the resources at our command that would be about the easiest thing you could ask."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Is any education needed for that position?"

"Not particularly," said Jinn. "Education is handy in a president, but not absolutely necessary. It won't help you to get the place. It's wire-pulling. The syndicate's good at that."

"That place would about suit me."

"It wouldn't pay you," remarked Jinn.

"Why not?"

"It's too much trouble and worry. You can't keep it long enough, anyhow."

"Then I don't want it, Jinn." Notwithstanding Jinn's assertion I could not quite believe him. I thought if I could get a good public office through his influence, with nothing to do but draw the pay, which was what I was led to believe was the usual occupation of such people, it would just suit me.

"You had better look higher," continued Jinn. "A bank president or a railroad magnate. There's something in that."

"But that would be hard work, wouldn't it, Jinn?"

"Sometimes it is."

Jinn's suggestion had reminded me of something.

"Jinn, you couldn't get me an introduction to a young lady, could you?"

"A written one?"

"No, that would hardly do. Get me acquainted with her somehow."

"What good would that do unless you were in her set?"

"True enough, Jinn. But couldn't you get me in her set?"

"I suppose it might be done," said Jinn, "but it would be a job. You had better get into business and better circumstances first."

"You could influence her through presents, you know."

"That's regular Aladdin business. We don't do it in that way nowadays. You don't mean to say that you're in love! That's played out too. You're nothing but a beggar."

"So was Aladdin, Jinn."

"True enough, but we had resources then that we haven't now. Do you think your young lady would appreciate big stones and lumps of glass and gold basins? She might take them, but she wouldn't think any more of you for it, nor her father, either."

"Well, Jinn, I was only trying you. It's not as bad as that. I'm not in love. I only wanted an in-

trodition. But that isn't the important business at present. It's how to tell mother about the school."

"I can't help you there," said Jinn.

"I'm sorry for mother, then. I thought you could help her bear it. But I'm satisfied. I suppose if you want to, you can arrange that introduction?"

Jinn was about to reply, but there was an interruption which prevented. Before the subject could be brought up again, I got my introduction in a very unexpected manner.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A BAD EXPOSURE.

THERE was more trouble to satisfy mother about the school than I expected. She did not believe the story that there was no room. She called upon the head-master herself, and came home with the whole truth. It was useless to try to fool her any longer, so I took another plan.

“Mother, it is no use trying. I’m not made to study. I was born that way. What’s the use anyhow? I’m pretty well provided for, and I’ve enough to get along. I have powerful friends who will help me. You know I am providing all the living expenses now. There are not many at my age that can do that.”

Mother was very unreasonable. She wouldn’t give up her opinions. She still thought I should study, after I had proved that it was impossible, or, at least, unnecessary.

The interruption in Jinn’s last interview was made



by Maggie, who rapped on my room door, apologizing to Jinn, not to me, for the necessity. There was a young lady in the parlor asking for Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Thomas rather wondered at this unusual occurrence, but made himself as presentable as possible and answered the summons. In the parlor sat Miss Golden, blushing, it is true, but perfectly irresistible. Mr. Thomas would have done anything for her, if it had not been too much trouble.

"Excuse me," she said, rising, "but I am in distress. I knew you were an honorable gentleman, so I came direct to you, as you alone can help me."

I could not understand this. Certainly I was not in position to assist the handsome and wealthy Miss Golden.

"You must be misinformed," I stammered. "Won't you be seated?"

She sat on the edge of a chair, as if ready to rise at any moment, but continued to speak rapidly.

"My name is Miss Golden. My father you have probably heard of. Did you ever see this?"

She handed me a small photograph. It was that of her father asleep in church. I had had several copies made, and they had sold well. I was expecting to sell more.

I felt rather badly as I acknowledged that I knew

the photograph, but could not resist a smile. Miss Golden smiled also.

Then we both laughed, the picture was so funny. After that we were at ease. The picture was a very satisfactory introduction.

"I believe you took it," said Miss Golden, looking at me with roguish, downcast eyes and a lurking smile.

I made a full confession, urging the irresistible attraction of the subject to an amateur photographer.

"I can feel for you," she said. "That is the reason I am here. I take pictures myself."

"So you wish to screen a fellow-photographer?"

"Exactly."

My admiration for that girl was unbounded. If I had not cared for her at all, she took the very best way to make me like her.

"How did you know that I had anything to do with this picture?" I asked.

"I saw you take it. I've taken too many snap-shots myself not to know it."

"Well, suppose I did?"

"It was very impolite and ungentlemanly."

"Indeed," I ventured.

"It has got me into trouble."

"That's another thing entirely," I hastened to say.

"You wish to get me out of it?"

"I do, most certainly. Anything that I can do shall be done. Tell me about it."

"Some one sent this to father. He thinks that I made it. He does not approve of my dabbling in pictures. He says it spoils my hands. He will stop my amusement in that line entirely. I heard him say so to mother."

"Did he give you the picture?"

"No. He was so angry that he only took a glance at it and brought it to mother at once. She gave it to me."

"Did he only glance at the picture?"

"Yes."

"Was he certain that it was his picture?"

"He could not mistake it. The likeness is excellent."

"I think I can arrange it."

"So as to clear me?"

"Certainly."

"How about the other copies?"

"I can get them all in, I think."

"And you will make no more?"

"I will give you the negative, and you can do what you like with it."

"You are a real gentleman," she said.

This was high praise, coming from such a source. It was an incentive to do as I proposed, but it did not lessen my regard for the person who made the remark.

"Does your father know any one that he particularly dislikes?" I asked.

"No one but little Job Stringer, the president of the Rival Short Line, you know. He used to be a clerk in pa's office. He's a little upstart, but got ahead, somehow. His little road is a miserable, poverty-stricken affair. I wish you could hear pa talk about him. He goes to our church, you know."

"I know the person exactly," I said. "You are a photographer, and I think you will be interested in an idea that just came to me. Suppose that I can get Job Stringer's picture and put it in place of your father's. You can show the picture and persuade your father that he was mistaken."

Miss Golden was all attention, though she did not quite understand.

"Wouldn't that be deceiving?" she inquired.

"To prove that Stringer's picture is Stringer's and not your father's?"

I explained my plans more fully. She then appeared more satisfied, but doubted my ability to

carry them out. I asked her to let it rest for a few days until I could show her. Then another question that came up in my mind, which was troubling me, had to be settled.

I had a guilty knowledge of the picture of Miss Golden herself with the banana, which I had made. I wished that I had never taken it. She might come across one some day, and then what would be her opinion of me? I had sense enough to feel that an honorable course, though unpleasant now, would be the best in the end. It would more surely win her regard if I confessed, apologized, and did what I could to undo the evil.

She could never have heard of the picture. The first time she should see one, she would certainly be shocked. Miss Golden rose to go, with many thanks to me. There was no time to think. The interview could be prolonged at least by introducing the new subject. That would be agreeable. I wished to become better acquainted and lay some foundation for a future intimacy.

"Miss Golden," I began, "I have a confession to make which concerns you. May I tell you?"

She looked at me in an uncertain kind of way, but did not answer.

"It is something, possibly, disagreeable to you,

about myself, but it must be said. Will you hear me?"

Miss Golden sank back into the chair, colored slightly, and still did not speak.

"It is about another picture."

"Oh," said Miss Golden, as if relieved.

"A picture of you."

"Of me?" said she angrily. "You didn't catch me in such a ridiculous position. Sir, you presume."

"No, you were not asleep,"—Miss Golden breathed freely again,—"but you were in almost as bad a position. I am very sorry."

"Sir, this insolence——" Miss Golden glared, but could not find words to express her thoughts.

"I am truly sorry," I said.

"Have you given away any copies?"

I was glad that Miss Golden had not asked if I had sold any. She made me see my action in quite a different light.

"Only a few, to intimate friends. I can easily recall them. I do not think that any personal friend of yours has seen them."

"No, or I should have heard of it. I am astonished at your insolence."

Miss Golden by this time had gotten over her first burst of indignation. I saw my chance.

"You would not have missed the chance yourself. You are a photographer, you know. I did not know who I was taking."

"Let me see the picture," said she.

"I am afraid to, until you get over it. It was pretty bad, I'll admit." I thought it best to have the worst over.

"Please let me see it," she persisted.

After I had reasoned with her a while, I went upstairs for a copy. As soon as she glanced at it she burst into a merry laugh.

"I remember the time exactly," she said. "You were on a bicycle. I did not notice that you had a camera. I knew you were that person when I saw you snap at pa in the church. You will not get this picture back, though."

"Then I won't get the other copies in, or give you that negative to destroy, if you want to, as I had intended," I said, banteringly. This brought her to terms.

"How many are there out?" she began, frightened again. "They are too undignified for anything. You're just horrid. I'll have pa have you arrested for stealing my photograph. You are horrid." Miss Golden evidently was really very much disturbed over the picture. I saw that I must change tactics to please her.

"Miss Golden," I began, "I am truly sorry, as I said. I shall do everything in my power to remedy the evil. You can keep the copy. The only reason I wanted it was because I wanted one remembrance of a very pleasant occurrence. There are but few things that I really care for, and that is one of them. I am sure, however, that if I do the just thing, you will not be so unreasonable as to deny me all pleasure. You will surely give me, a fellow-photographer, a better picture of yourself as a keepsake."

She felt slightly flattered by the request probably. At any rate she spoke more calmly afterwards.

"Perhaps," she said. "It depends altogether on how you behave. I will see what you do about this horrid picture."

She tore it up and again rose to go.

"May I have the pleasure of calling upon you to report progress?"

"O mercy, no!" said Miss Golden, recalled to a sense of her social position, which no comradeship over photographs could overcome. "What would pa say? Don't mention anything about this visit. Please don't. Good-day." She hurried off.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *A DIFFICULT SUBJECT.*

I CALLED Jinn at once.

"Jinn, do you know how many pictures of Miss Golden you made for me?"

"It's on file, the exact number from every negative, and from whom we ordered them," Jinn stated.

"Jinn, I want to have the number, and I will try to remember whom I sold them to. Then I want you to allow them up and buy them back."

"It may take a lot of money," said Jinn. "The pictures were good and the young lady popular. The young fellows will want to hold on to them."

"Well, Jinn, if I don't mind the trouble of trying to remember, which is a big trouble, I don't see why you should mind your trouble." I felt as if I could do anything for Miss Golden. It was very unusual in me.

"And, Jinn, I want the negatives of Miss Golden and Mr. Golden. That is all at present."

Jinn brought me the negatives and the information at once. He said the number printed was marked on each negative. Mr. Golden had been printed fifty times and Miss Golden one hundred and sixty-two. The negatives were film, not glass, and the memorandum was in pencil.

It was useless for me to try to remember where I had sold one hundred and sixty-two copies. One thing was certain. They were all sold to school-boys.

"Jinn, the only way you can arrange this is to take the list of pupils at the school, and see every one of them, until you find one hundred and sixty-two boys who bought the photographs. If any of them have been re-sold, find out to whom, and follow them up."

Jinn made a wry face, but my order was imperative. "I'd sooner have Aladdin any day," he muttered as he turned to go.

"Look here, Jinn, you didn't ask me if there was anything else to-day."

"It's no use. I know there is."

"Isn't it part of the regulations that you should?"

"It is," admitted Jinn.

"Then see you do it," I added, "or I report you." It was sometimes inconvenient to have Jinn everlastingly going over the same formula, but I was not

going to run any risks of his becoming insubordinate. He should stick to the regulations.

"Is there anything else to-day?" growled Jinn, ill-humoredly, and in as low a tone as possible.

"Not that I know of at present," I returned.

Jinn did not say how many experts he put upon the work I had ordered, but he returned the same day with one hundred and sixty-one of Miss Golden's pictures.

"Where is the other one?" I asked.

"Couldn't get it," replied Jinn. "It had been resold. These cost me over two hundred dollars to get back."

"That's a loss, surely, Jinn. It must not occur again. But who has the other copy?"

"Job Stringer. He gave a ten-dollar bill for his, and won't part with it for any money, he said. I offered him five hundred."

This young upstart then, though he was a president of a little two-penny railway, was a rival. I hated him already. What should he want with Miss Golden's picture? I would get it from him by some means. There was a plot already on foot against him. I would carry that out and more. I would do him an injury. A good thought occurred to me how to do it.

I sent Jinn, with the one hundred and sixty-one photographs, the two negatives, and a polite note, to Miss Golden. I was ashamed of the large number, but, at all events, she would surely think they were all in. I asked her to excuse the quantity, saying, "I had no idea there were so many, but they were certainly pretty, and did not put the subject of the photograph in an unpleasant light in that particular. In fact," I added, "the pictures are perfectly bewitching, which caused the demand, and that is the reason I wanted to keep just one." She could not but be pleased at such a statement.

Jinn returned with a very short note.

"Would Mr. Thomas please give up at once the one copy of the picture, kept without authority, and in disregard of positive promises to the contrary. It is idle to try to deceive a photographer. Mr. Thomas would not have ordered one hundred and sixty-one prints, large as that number is. He would have ordered by the dozen. Nineteen-and-one-half dozen would be one hundred and sixty-two. Mr. Thomas should recollect his agreement, and not put a young lady to such inconvenience, and danger of scandal."

I wrote back, stating that there was one additional picture, but that I had not been able to get it as yet,

though I hoped to shortly. I had offered five hundred dollars for it, which had been refused.

This information had been added because I wished to be considered an equal. I was conscious that my social standing was not the same as hers; but even among all her wealthy acquaintances, I doubted if there was one young man who could or would have offered five hundred dollars for the recovery of one of her pictures. I did not foresee that, to state this fact, would let her know that the picture was in some one's hands who valued it highly.

In an incredibly short time after the receipt of my note, Miss Golden called upon me again. She was furious. She must know who held her picture. I mentioned the name of Mr. Job Stringer. Miss Golden almost fainted.

"I can get it back, I am sure I can, my dear Miss Golden," I urged. "I am going to play him a trick that will pay him off, too. You will enjoy it, I am sure. You don't like him?"

"Like him! I detest him. And pa would have a fit if he knew it. I will never speak to you again until you get that photograph."

"Then perhaps I can't get it. I may need your help."

"I shall not speak to you again. You're horrid."

"Then I can't set your father's picture right either."

"I will speak about that, if necessary. Let me see you do something besides talk, to undo all the mischief you have done."

"Would you wish to be so cruel? Remember, I am a fellow-photographer."

"It is immaterial to me."

Miss Golden swept out of the house haughtily. I wished I had a snap-shot at her now. No matter what happened, she was handsome. She was certainly more of a beauty now than in the funny picture. There she was only bewitching.

I was sorry to give her so much trouble, and was honestly determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish what she wished. I had never had such an object to work for, and the sensation was both novel and pleasant. It came, too, at an opportune moment, when I had nothing to do. I felt so much the better for it, and showed it so plainly, that mother noticed it.

"You see," I said, "it all comes from allowing me to leave school. That never did agree with me. It's such a relief, now it's over."

The camera, or rather the book-package, went to church with us again the next Sunday. Mother

asked me why I took the books to church. I told her that I had expected to give them to a friend who was anxious to read them, they were very interesting. He had not been there when I brought them the first time.

Mother reached out, took the package of books, and read the titles. One was a *Lady's Annual* of 1836; another, *Miss Parloa's Cook Book*; and the third, a *Government Report of the Department of Agriculture*. I had not looked at the contents of the books, hardly at the titles. I had purchased them for size and price. Mother gave me no chance to remedy my mistake. She looked at me sharply, but did not say that she disbelieved me. If she had asked me, it would not have been hard to satisfy her. It did not make much difference whether she were satisfied or not. If it had been *Miss Golden*, it would have been another matter.

The package of books was placed on the railing as before. After the services began, I looked around for *Job Stringer*. I did not know where he sat. Though I knew who he was, I had never seen him in church. Until *Miss Golden* told me, I did not know that he was an attendant. No wonder. I soon saw little *Stringer* on our side of the church, where I could not see him without leaning over the gallery. It would

be impossible to get a shot at him from where I sat, without being noticed. What should be done?

"Mother," I whispered, "I have a bad headache this morning. This light here is very trying. I am afraid I shall have to go home, unless I can go over to the other side of the gallery." Any one who has tried it, knows that one does not object to lying after he gets used to it.

Mother was afraid that I would go home, so she readily consented to have me move my seat for that service. On the other side there was plenty of room. When I got there I was delighted. Mr. Stringer was at about the same distance from the camera as Mr. Golden had been, so the picture would be the same size. Stringer's seat was further back than Mr. Golden's, so I moved my seat in the gallery to suit. I waited until the sermon, hoping to catch him napping, as I had Mr. Golden.

In this I was disappointed. Mr. Stringer appeared to be made of steel springs. He was a thin, nervous, jerky man, always on the alert. To catch him napping was about as easy as to find a quiet day-nursery. The sermon dragged along its regular length, but no chance for a shot. Fearful that it might come to a close, without anything being accomplished, I took a snap at Stringer as he was, broad awake and bolt



upright. It seemed that he hardly kept still long enough, even for that.

Miss Golden had been noticing the whole performance, including my change of seat, for which she knew the reason. She appeared not to notice or look my way, but she was conscious of everything. When I snapped the camera at Stringer, she jumped slightly. She did not look at me, but at him, probably to see if he were nodding. It is to be hoped that she felt disappointed that he was not.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A SATISFIED AND DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER.

As much as possible, I had refrained from summoning Jinn on Sunday, not knowing what his sentiments or regulations might be on the subject. Mother would not be apt to care for his visits on that day, either. But this time the case was urgent. My whole standing with Miss Golden depended upon something being done at once. I know that I had not succeeded with the picture, but I wanted to feel that I had tried something. Jinn was therefore directed to have it developed and a print made, so that I could see what it was like.

Jinn stated that, as he had the work done out, he could not attend to it until the next morning, but he would push it then; with which statement I had to be content.

Early the next day Jinn brought it in. It was an excellent likeness, but nothing more. No one who

had ever seen my picture of Mr. Golden could possibly mistake it for Stringer's. The church surroundings were the same, but the position was entirely different. It was useless to try the plan that I had in mind.

Now if I had only had Mr. Golden's position and surroundings with Stringer's face. That was what I had been aiming for. To see how it would have looked, I got a copy of Mr. Golden's picture (Miss Golden had not insisted that they should be called in, probably because she forgot it in the anxiety about her own), cut out the head from Stringer's carefully, and pasted it on top of Mr. Golden's. The effect was excellent. That was what I had wanted. Here was an idea. Why not have this picture copied as I had changed it. It would probably copy nicely. Jinn was called at once.

"Jinn, have this picture copied as clear as possible, retouched on the negative, and about one dozen prints struck off."

Jinn withdrew after the usual formula.

The composite pictures came back the next day. The line where the cut-out head joined the original ground-work, had been touched out in the negative. It was not perceptible. The picture, if anything, was better than the original. No one would notice

whether it was Mr. Golden's body or Stringer's. The pew end and other surroundings showed plainly where the picture was taken. Miss Golden had not been sitting close enough to her father to get in the field, and did not appear. But the nodding effect was better than before. In place of Mr. Golden's closed eyes, was Stringer's wide-open staring ones. They would have been called piercing if his head had been in the proper position, but being thrown back as Mr. Golden's head was, they gave a startled effect. It gave the idea of a person who has just nodded backwards, and has been awakened by the shock. The picture might have been taken at the moment when the eyes were first opened, before the proper position of the head had been recovered, and before the sleeper had fully comprehended what was the matter.

A copy of the picture was at once sent to Miss Golden, with a note saying that I did not think her accusations against me for photographing her father were well-founded. On examination of the picture, I failed to find her father's likeness at all.

Miss Golden took the hint at once, apparently without scruple. As soon as she received the picture, she took it to her father.

"Pa, I understand from ma that you blame me for

photographing you. Is this the picture you are provoked about?" she said, exhibiting the one I had just sent her.

"Yes, daughter," said her father, glancing at it, "and I think it very unladylike in you ever to make pictures, to say nothing of taking mine in that position."

"Why, pa," she replied, "I do not see why you should blame me if that is the picture. I do not see how you could ever say that was your picture. You must have changed greatly."

Her father took the print in his hand to examine it closer.

"It's certainly the picture that was sent me."

"But it's not your face, pa."

"No——"

"Who is it, pa?" she asked, knowing her father's great antipathy, and sure of her ground if her father once recognized it.

"Great Scott, if it isn't Stringer! Why, it's excellent. Did you do this, daughter? It does you credit."

"No, pa, I didn't do it. You blamed me unjustly. Whoever did it probably knew how it would please you, that might be why he sent it."

"Do you know who sent me the copy?"

"How should I know who sent it?" she answered. "I think a gentleman friend of mine made it. It looks like his work."

"Well, if you had done this, I should say that you might photograph all you want to. I never saw anything so funny in my life, and he always so prim, too. I thought he never slept, not only in church, but any time. He looks like it. But he was caught napping this time. I'd sooner have that picture than twenty-five dollars. I believe it would affect the price of his stock. Nobody would have any confidence in the business ability of any one that could look like that. Give your friend my congratulations. If he ever wants me to do him a favor, let him say he caught Job Stringer napping. By Jove, I'll have some fun out of this."

Miss Golden did not deliver this message at once. There was still an unfinished matter between us. But she was grateful to me for getting her out of the scrape, as well as for the dig at the man she disliked.

She did not, however, quite like the deception practiced by her on her pa, so she thought she had better tell her mother exactly how the case stood, and ask whether she should let her father remain under the wrong impression.

Her mother said it certainly was not right, though

she enjoyed the joke. As the matter required some management, her mother said to leave it in her hands. She would try to make it all right with pa. She would confess the deception and obtain forgiveness. It was probable that he would not be very angry, after all, even when he found that he had been photographed, now that he was so well pleased with the new picture. In that case the deception was entirely unnecessary. Miss Golden should have told the truth at once. This was her mother's opinion.

Miss Golden wrote me a cold, formal note, from which I gathered these facts. I got temporary possession of one or two of Mr. Golden's pictures, that I had sold, under different excuses, and returned in place of them copies of the altered pictures. One of these pictures I afterwards heard of. The owner showed it to a friend, mentioning Mr. Golden's name. The friend replied that he could not see any Golden in the picture—it was Stringer. They offered to bet upon it. Before they put up the money, the owner was asked to look at the picture again.

"You must have 'hoodooed' the picture since I gave it to you," he said. "Sure as fate, it is Stringer. It was Golden when I got it, I'll swear to it."

"Well, it's Stringer now," returned the friend. "Better watch it and see it change back to Golden."

He put it on his desk, where he could see it daily, fully expecting that it would change; but it never did.

Without Jinn's help, I managed to exchange all the copies of Golden's picture in the same way. I could remember where all of the smaller number went. I had a double incentive to make the exertion: my dislike of Stringer, whom I had never known, and my desire to please Miss Golden. I wished to tell her that all her father's pictures were in and destroyed. I hated Stringer for keeping Miss Golden's picture. I planned revenge for him.

By my orders, Jinn furnished me five hundred copies of the new composite picture. On the next Sunday morning, I stationed boys outside the church door, after service, and told them to hand a copy to every young man whom they saw, if they could do so without attracting too much attention. They distributed them liberally. The effect was just jolly. It was just what such a mean, skulking fellow deserved. If he had given up Miss Golden's picture decently, like a gentleman, it wouldn't have happened. I followed Stringer home, keeping on the other side of the street. I am sure that at least fifty of his friends showed him the picture on the way, and they all probably told him that it was a good joke. They laughed immensely. He was furious.



I also sent copies to all of the officials of the Rival Short Line, so far as I could get their names, and to the clerks in the office. The first thing I knew, he had advertised a reward of a hundred dollars for the discovery of the person who had made and circulated the pictures. Then I suddenly awoke to the fact that I had done something which was against the law. I kept quiet and did not send out any more copies. Had I been caught, Mr. Golden might have helped me out, for he heard of the whole thing and enjoyed it greatly. But I was frightened badly. I asked Jinn if there was any danger that the people who made the prints would give me away.

"They don't know who I am or where I live," said Jinn, "even if they should want to tell. Besides, I am a good customer, and I am sure they would not injure their own business. I will sound them. If there is any danger, I can soon arrange it."

Now, the question was, how to get Miss Golden's picture away from Stringer, without which my chances of her favor were very poor. About this I had to have Jinn's advice. At first he was at a loss what to suggest, but he finally solved the problem very satisfactorily.

## CHAPTER XX.

## AN EXPERIMENT IN CHEMISTRY.

JINN suggested various plans for getting possession of the picture, none of which I would agree to. They all involved more or less of lying or stealing, which I did not approve of. I had lately gotten into several difficulties by such a course, and I did not like it. I had come to the conclusion that it would be less trouble to do the thing right.

One of Jinn's plans was to murder Stringer and take the picture; another, to burn his house down, with the picture in it. I read Jinn a lecture on the enormity of these proposed offenses. He scoffed at the idea that there was anything wrong in it.

"Why, that's my business," he said. "In the olden time we always killed somebody every day, sometimes a great many people, if we couldn't get what we wanted in any other way. And, as for lying, why, that is absolutely necessary. Even the syndicate,

which is not supposed to approve of the old ways, raises no objection, if the experts do not get themselves into a scrape. The motto now is, 'Carry out your orders—honestly, if you can, but if not, carry out your orders.' They are not particular about the means, so we gain the end. I don't see why they should be."

Come to think of it, it was not likely that Jinn would object, as he was of Chinese descent; but I must be careful that he did not get me into bad habits and trouble.

The plan we finally agreed upon required Miss Golden's assistance, but it met with the approval of both Jinn and myself. Miss Golden was written to, asking if I might call upon her. She asked and obtained her mother's permission, on what grounds I cannot say. It was certain that I was not received as a personal friend.

"Miss Golden," I said, when I saw her, "I am straining every nerve to get the last remaining copy of your picture from Mr. Stringer, but the only way that I can see by which it can be done, will require your assistance."

Miss Golden was pleased at the prospect of getting the picture, and inquired what she could do.

"Have you any copies of the picture left?"

"I burned them, every one."

"You have not the negative?"

"I believe I have the negative. That would not have been preserved, except for a habit I have fallen into. I cannot bear to destroy a negative. It so often happens that it is wanted again, and then the loss is irreparable. I did not suppose that this would be wanted again, and I fully intend to destroy it."

"Then, Miss Golden, if you wish your picture back you will have to trust slightly to my honor. I will have to have the loan of your negative. You cannot ask me to explain all that I will do with it. There shall be but one picture printed from it, and that I promise you shall be destroyed. The negative will be returned, and with it the picture which Mr. Stringer holds. If I fail in this, I will never see you again. Do you not think you can trust me?"

It was not possible to tell whether Miss Golden had any opinion of me or not, but she could certainly see that I was in earnest. She was very anxious to get the picture out of Stringer's hands. The result was that she brought me the two negatives of herself and her father.

I lit a match and burned Mr. Golden's negative before her eyes, informing her that every copy which had been in existence had now been destroyed. "If

I have succeeded with his, you may be sure I will with yours." She evidently took my word for it and was grateful. The other negative I took with me.

Jinn took, it and had one enlarged picture made from it by means of what is known as the "Solar print" process. It was an ordinary print on silvered paper, except that it was very large, about two feet in length. By Jinn's orders it had been finished in a peculiar way. After the print was made and fixed, it was not washed thoroughly as usual, to clear it of the chemical known as "hypo," which fixes it, or prevents it from being again affected by the light. The hypo had done its work, so far as that process was concerned, but the chemical itself was left in the paper. To all appearances the print was as usual. It was toned hurriedly. The roughness was touched up with India ink. It was nicely mounted, burnished, covered with a pasteboard mat and glass, without frame, and bound around the edges with colored paper. In this form it was easily carried. Jinn took it to Mr. Stringer's office, wrapped neatly in brown paper. Stringer recognized Jinn as the man who had offered him five hundred dollars for Miss Golden's picture. He thought that Jinn had been sent by Mr. Golden, at Miss Golden's suggestion, though Jinn

would not acknowledge it. Who else would want the picture so badly?

"So you are here again," said Stringer. "It's no use. The stock has gone up. One thousand dollars wouldn't buy my share in it now."

"I did not come to offer you more money," said Jinn. "I am here to make money, if possible. I am in need of it. If you care for that picture, I think you will pay me handsomely for another. I suppose you think you have the only copy of that picture of Miss Golden's now in existence?"

"So I have been told, by you, I think."

"I was so informed. I supposed the information correct. I have been mistaken. There is one other copy, and one only. Would you like to be the owner of all there are?"

"Perhaps. I am not sure," said Stringer.

"This one is superior, far superior."

"How do I know that it is the only one? If there are two, why not more?"

"If there were," said Jinn, "I should know it. I have made it my business to ask the manufacturer how many were made, and I have followed up every one. This one is a copy, and no more can be made now except from yours."

"Have you it with you?" asked Stringer.

"It is in this paper. Shall I show it?"

"Do."

Jinn uncovered it. The sight of it set Stringer wild. He evidently wanted it, but the trouble was how to make him give up the other. He would want both copies.

"Compare it with the original," said Jinn, setting it up on the desk and putting the inkstand in front of it to hold it in place. "Put yours up in front of it. I will not touch it."

Stringer took his copy out of his pocket, and did so. After the pictures had stood awhile in that position, Jinn said :

"Don't you want to buy it? You won't get another chance. If old Golden knew of the big one, he would pay handsomely, but I thought you would pay more."

"I will give you five dollars for it," said Stringer, thinking his man was hard up, and would be willing to dicker.

Jinn was apparently very much affronted at this remark. He took up the large picture quickly, and, in so doing, by a quick movement, upset the large inkstand. It upset in such a way that it flooded the whole desk with ink. The ink covered the small picture, and ran down over Mr. Stringer's clothes.

"Rascal," yelled he, jumping up quickly. "You'll pay for this, you clumsy brute. Now you'll give me your picture for nothing. You've ruined mine." The uproar brought several clerks to the room.

"Take that big picture away and hold it. Don't you give it to him," ordered Stringer to one of them. "Here, get this ink up, somebody, quick! Confound the fellow!"

While they were all hard at work, Jinn picked up the small picture which was lying face up upon the desk, but under a large pool of ink. He turned it over, wiped it off, and slipped it into his pocket, saying :

"If you steal mine, I shall steal yours."

"You're welcome to it, now you've ruined it," said Stringer. "It's lucky you brought the other one. If you hadn't, you'd be on the way to jail now. As it is, you'll get off with a whole skin, but no picture, no matter who it belongs to."

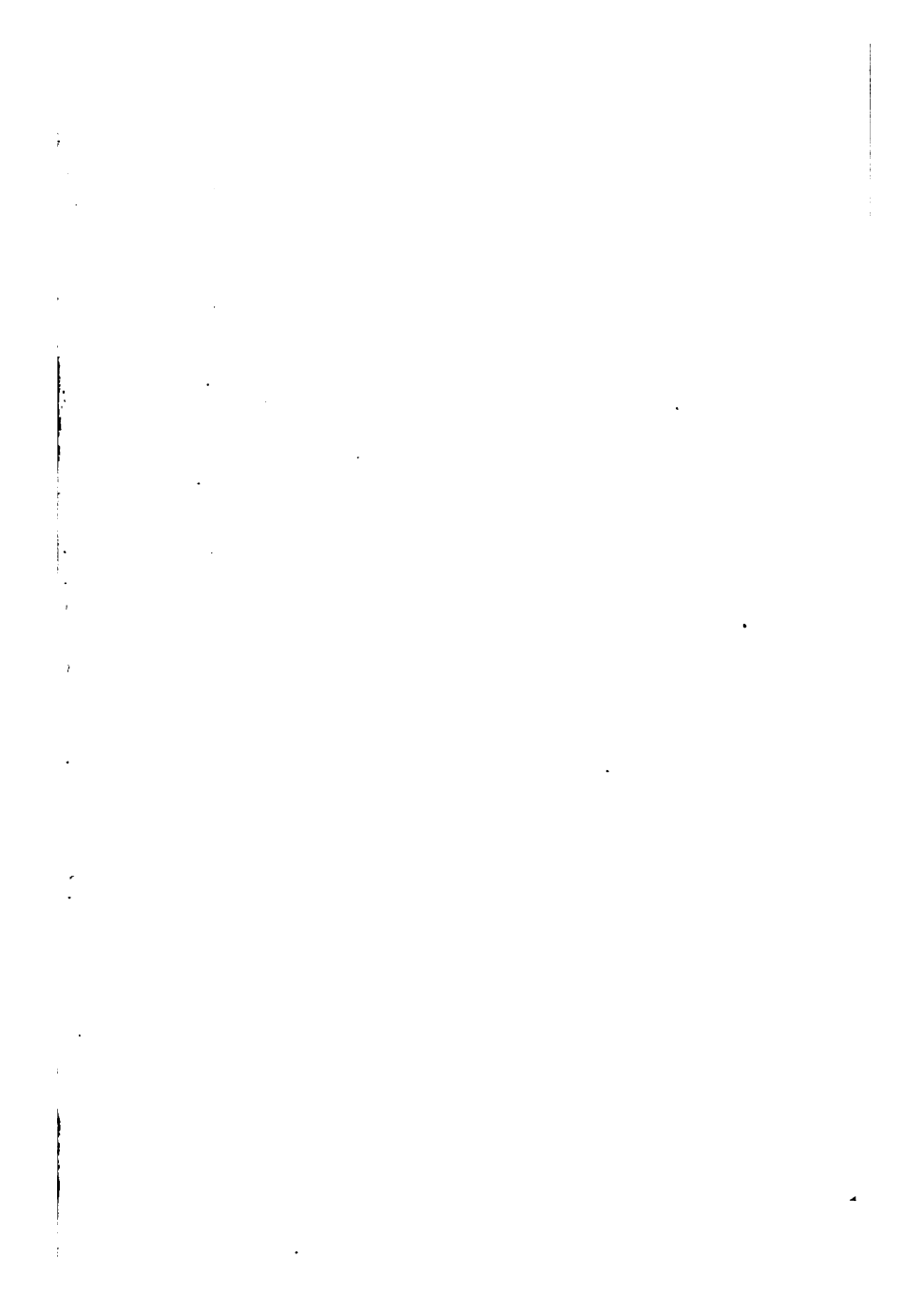
"You will not have only me to fight but the owner too," said Jinn.

"That's all bosh. You stole it to sell to me. Get out."

"Not without a thousand dollars for that picture," insisted Jinn.

This remark incensed Mr. Stringer highly. He







She sat on their clasped hands with her arms on their shoulders. — p. 151.

touched a bell and summoned two private watchmen who were always in attendance.

"Put this man out," he ordered. "If he wont go, take him to the lock-up."

Jinn grumbled, but appeared to make the best of it, going unwillingly, but with the little picture in his pocket. It was injured, it was true, but under the coating of ink it was very easy to distinguish what the picture had been.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF.

MR. STRINGER did not care to hang a picture, such as the large one he had taken possession of, in his business office. That night he took it home with him and gloated over it. He hung it in his own room. As he was a single man, he could do as he pleased.

Jinn brought the injured picture, with the negative, back to me. I hastened to send them to Miss Golden.

In a few days there was a sensation in Stringer's apartments. The large picture was hung in a good light. It did not take more than a day's time for some little white stains and blotches to appear on it. Some of these were dark-brown discolorations, others whitish-gray crystallizations, where the chemical was in great excess. Stringer noticed the first spot. As he watched daily, the spots increased in number and size, until the whole picture was covered. Soon there was nothing in the frame but a discolored piece

of paper. Then Mr. Stringer was furious. He was the one who had been the victim of a previous photographic joke, when he had offered a reward of a hundred dollars to find out who was at the bottom of the mischief. He recollected that the pictures of himself were of the same style and size as the small one of Miss Golden, and both of the same ridiculous order. This had not occurred to him before. He had always looked upon his as the height of impudence, and on hers as the height of enjoyment. They had not appeared to be at all similar. Now his eyes were opened. As Jinn had been connected with Miss Golden's picture, why might not he have been the one who had photographed Stringer. Mr. Stringer would go for Jinn, and with the intention to get him.

Accordingly, advertisements were issued, offering one thousand dollars reward for the apprehension of the swindler who sold a large worthless picture at the office of the Rival Short Line. The advertisement did not say who it was sold to, nor for what price. A lengthy description of the man was given. Detectives were also put upon the case.

The only difficulty was that the description did not fit Jinn in any particular. He had taken good care, as he always did when he appeared to any one outside of his lawful masters, not to look as usual.

Mr. Stringer never had to pay his thousand dollars. He never heard anything more about it. The large picture was burned up as worthless.

My interest in Miss Golden, and a desire for her acquaintance, had not only made me dislike work somewhat less, but, while my fancy for her was nothing serious, made me wish that I had some settled occupation in life. I wanted a future. I was not so blind as not to see that, without such occupation, I would never be received as a friend and equal in the house of the wealthy Mr. Golden. I must also have some money, and must show ability. At present I had no standing. I was not in her set.

In this emergency I called up Jinn for advice.

"Is there no occupation," I asked, "in the whole world, that you could help me to, in which I would not have to work? I want standing and position badly."

"There is none," said Jinn, "unless you want to go into Congress."

"Don't you have to work there?"

"You can if you want to. You can make a name if you have the brains. If you haven't, you need do nothing whatever, only draw the pay."

"How about the speeches, Jinn?"

"You don't need to make any unless you feel like

it. If you do, I can have them written for you, and you can read them, or you can have them printed without. It's hardly worth while to read them. Nobody would pay any attention to you if you did."

"How could I get such a position?"

"I could attend to that," said Jinn. "It's only a question of money and influence,—wire-pulling. I can attend to that. Brains don't count in getting it, though they show sometimes after you get it, if you happen to have any."

"But if I get it and don't make a good record, I can't hold it."

"Nothing of the sort," insisted Jinn. "Not if you have money and influence."

"And if I want it, all I have to do is to say the word?"

"No, in your case you're too young as yet. You'll have to wait a while."

"Then I'll think about it a while. But, Jinn, there's one thing, I want some decent clothes." I had in mind the fact that I did not feel in place when I last called at Miss Golden's."

"Why don't you order them, then?" asked Jinn.

"Of you?"

"Yes."

"I'll do so. Anything I want?"

"Anything in reason."

"Then, Jinn, I want a good best suit. A suit such as Golden or Stringer would wear of an evening or on Sunday."

"You'd better have a business suit instead," said Jinn.

"Yes, bring me a business suit, too, a handsome one, though. And, Jinn, while you're at it, have a dress suit also. I'll want it before long."

"Broadcloth?"

"Yes, the best there is. I'll leave it all to you. And fashionable. And I want everything to go with it, nice shirts and collars and underwear, hosiery, two pairs of new shoes, neckwear, all kinds, to choose from at different times. And I want a handsome, heavy overcoat, dressy, you know, a heavy ulster for storms, a light overcoat for spring and fall, a light storm-coat, mackintosh, rubbers, several good silk umbrellas with fancy handles (if the handles are very odd designs, so much the better), some canes, a dressing-gown and slippers, a Derby hat, a silk hat—this year's style, you know—an opera hat, and you might bring some jewelry. I've never had anything to go with the watch and chain, you know. Bring some rings—one a diamond—some scarf-pins, as different in style as possible, cuff-buttons, et cetera."



“Is there anything else——”

“Yes, Jinn, there is. I’m not near done. And bring me some—I believe I can’t think of anything else in that line.”

“Won’t your mother want something?”

“I think not. She’s all right. She always looks well. If you choose I’ll ask her.”

“It would be as well,” said Jinn.

“Mother,” I said, after I had found her hard at work in her room sewing, “I’m going to have some clothes sent me. Is there anything you would like to have?”

“No, Thomas,” said she, “I think I do not need anything. Fit yourself out, all you can. Never mind me.”

“Isn’t there anything you need, a pair of stockings or something?”

“No, I think my stockings will do for a while yet, with a little attention.”

With this message I returned to Jinn.

Jinn departed. I fully expected that the wagons of the various shop-keepers would begin to drive up within an hour or so, as they did when I first ordered the provisions; but they did not. All day I waited. About nightfall Jinn came unsolicited.

“Now, what’s the matter, Jinn? Didn’t you understand the orders?”

"The orders are all right, turned in and registered. But the boss is down on it. Says he never heard of such a thing before."

"Are you so low in funds," I asked, "that you can't fill a paltry order like that?"

"The funds are all right, so are we. It's the regulations. If you insist upon it, will fill the order, but it's your own risk. Boss thought, as you were young, I'd better warn you first."

"What's wrong, Jinn?"

"Ever since this firm went into existence and before, it's been the rule of the trade that any one who has a lease of the lamp has to use it under certain conditions. You ought to learn the terms of the lease, but of course you haven't sense enough. We don't exhibit the lease, but every one who has ever had the lamp knows by the experience of his predecessors what has been allowed and what hasn't. When the thing's done fair and square the lessee has prosperity. If he uses his privileges rightly, he can keep on forever. If he abuses them, there is nothing for us to do but obey orders, whatever he may insist on, but then it always happens that he gets bit in the end. He forfeits the lease, or the lamp gets stolen. Very often he loses his life and another steps into his shoes. There's usually no right and wrong to business, but

that's our specialty. That's why we're so successful. We can do anything. It's our long good record. You'd better be warned."

"What did I do wrong?"

"You ordered everything under the sun that you could think of, for yourself, but nothing for your mother."

"But she said she did not want anything."

"That don't pass. We know what mothers are, if you don't. She was afraid there would not be enough to get all you wanted."

"But if she won't have it, what am I to do?"

"Give her something, anyhow."

"But I don't know what would suit her."

"Ask some lady friend, then."

## CHAPTER XXII.

## CHRISTMAS OUT OF SEASON.

JINN's last remark suggested an idea. I had not called upon Miss Golden since I had returned her last ink-stained photograph and the negative. I was waiting to hear from her. Here was a good excuse. I knew she was prominent in charitable societies at the church, and was often called upon to distribute clothing to needy people. I would make the fact of her experience an excuse to see her, as I had no lady friends to advise me in making a present to mother. Miss Golden knew who mother was. It would help my standing with Miss Golden to have the name of doing such a thing for my mother. I would make the order as large as possible, so that I would be thought liberal. I was afraid, too, of losing my own outfit, if I was not generous to mother.

On stating the case to Miss Golden, she fell into the spirit of the thing at once. She appeared to have

forgiven me the photograph scrape, but I could see that I was not received as a friend, hardly an acquaintance. My connection was simply a matter of business. I was a mere errand-boy.

Miss Golden called upon my mother, introduced herself as a member of the church society, which mother knew of, and asked if there were any needy cases in our neighborhood. She begged mother not to stop any occupation she might be engaged upon.

"I will sit with you and talk as you work," she said. "I will then feel that I am not intruding, and can stay the longer if you want me."

Mother took her visitor to her own room, and resumed her sewing. Miss Golden was surprised to find mother at such occupation, particularly when she saw the class of goods that mother was at work on. It could easily be seen that the articles were not for our use. They could only be the kind that were paid for at so much a dozen by the wholesale dealers, and given out to any sewing woman who would take them. She knew from experience with poor families, not only the class of goods, but the prices paid for the work, which were miserably small.

On various pleas, such as trying to find if there were not some old things which mother would like to give away to poor people, she managed to in-

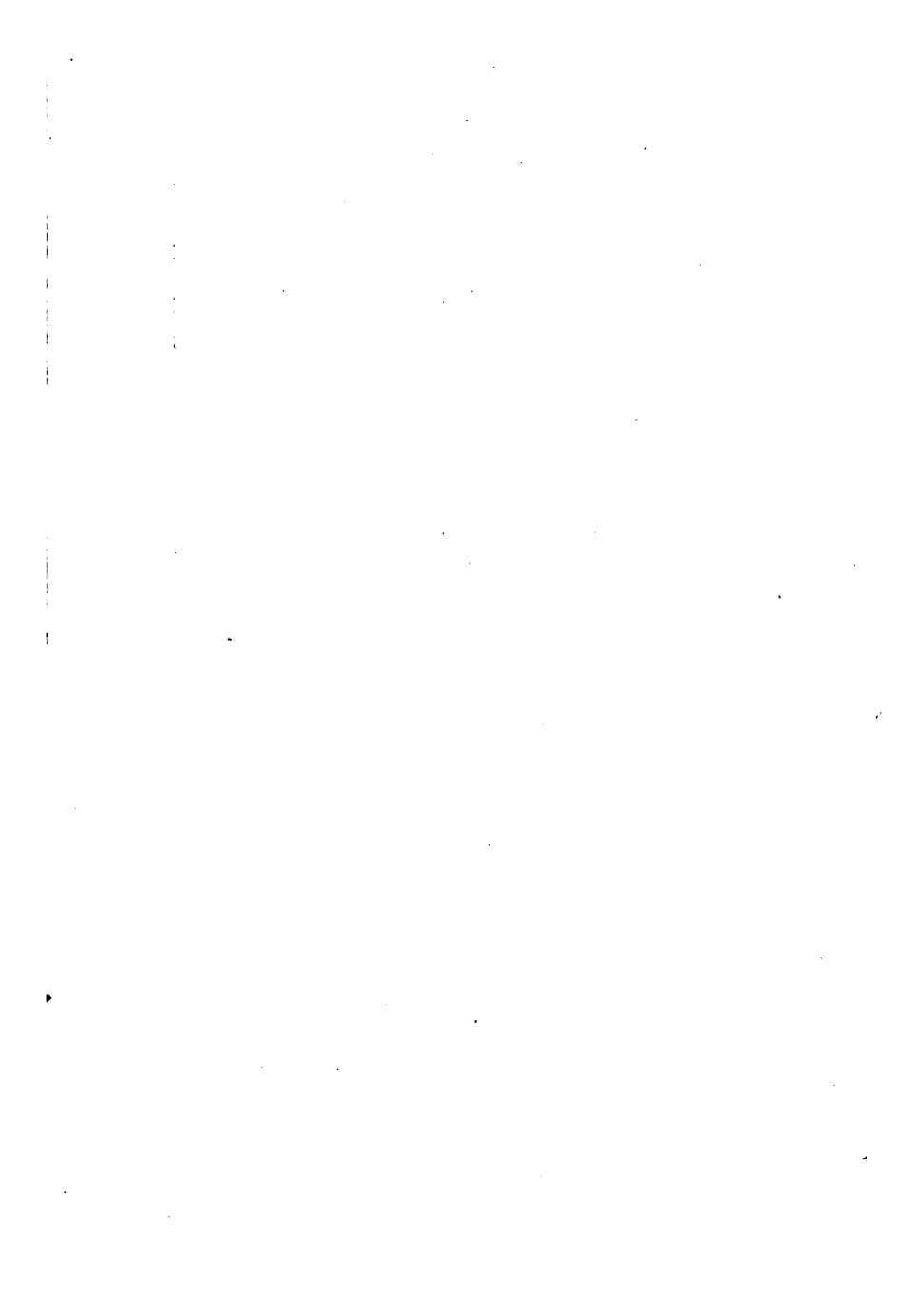
spect all of mother's wardrobe and household outfit. She must have liked mother. That was a good thing for me. Mother liked her immensely. Mother gave an insight into our condition, without meaning to. Miss Golden listened, sympathizing as necessary.

"Your son must be doing well in business," said Miss Golden, which remark was called forth, probably, by the fact of my proposed present.

On this point mother was silent. For the life of her, she could not say that I was in any business. She knew that to admit that would injure me in the eyes of Miss Golden. Mother simply said that I was doing well enough, and went on in praise of me, as mothers will.

After spending nearly the whole afternoon with mother, Miss Golden departed, greatly pleased with her visit, and promising to call again. As for mother, from that day, I hardly heard anything but praise for Miss Golden.

Miss Golden sent me a written list, which included a full outfit of table, bed, and household linen, a silk dress, and six others of different materials, for winter and summer, underwear, shoes, two bonnets, kid gloves (that reminded me that I had not asked for kid gloves for myself), some wraps for winter, and about everything that an elderly lady could possibly





"Let me dust it for you."—p. 163.



need, supposing that she had nothing to begin with, even down to a bottle of cologne, and a box of fancy soap. This list was given to Jinn, along with my additional order for kids. Jinn seemed satisfied. In a very short time the packages began to arrive, addressed either to mother or myself. Then there was a continuous stream of tailors, shoemakers, milliners, dressmakers, and shirtmakers, to measure, fit and consult, until Maggie began to rebel about the door-bell.

Mother blessed and hugged me, but said she believed Miss Golden had something to do with it, though she thanked me all the same, for providing the means. It did feel kind of good to be able to help mother. She owned up that she needed every blessed thing that came, awfully bad,—that her own would not have held together much longer. It had given her many a headache thinking how to provide them by the time they would be needed. She wished to look decent for my sake. The prices she received for her sewing were certainly very small. It was a wonder how she did all she had done. Now she would not have to work so hard. She would have to do something, for the interest on the mortgage, servants' wages, and little odds and ends had to be met. Besides, every now and then, something about

the house, furniture, or carpets gave out, and had to be renewed. Things would not last forever.

The present to mother had given me the knowledge, for the first time in my life, that there was pleasure in giving things, as well as in receiving them. I would not have believed it possible. So, when mother mentioned these other liabilities, it set me thinking.

"Why could not I do her another favor, if Jinn were willing?"

Jinn was asked at once: "Could not mother have a little ready money regularly?"

Jinn brightened up as soon as I made the request.

"So you're actually asking for your mother, and really because you want her to have it?"

"I am," I said, rather ashamed of the fact that the request seemed unusual.

"You shall have it. The boss will be delighted that his advice has done some good."

"And, Jinn, how about the mortgage that bothers mother? Can that be—be——"

"Paid?" asked Jinn, so suddenly that I jumped. I had been afraid to ask it. It was such a big thing.

"Yes," I faltered.

"Do you want it paid for your mother's sake, or for your own?"

I was afraid to say. It seemed to me that I wanted it for mother's sake, but I was not sure.

Jinn watched me, but did not press me further.

"Do you order it paid?" said Jinn, smiling.

"I do, Jinn, if it is possible, if you please."

Jinn said nothing more about it at once, but I knew he would mention it again to get particulars, so I left it until he was ready. He had something else in his noddle.

"Please, Mr. Thomas," began Jinn, very respectfully, which was something very unusual for him, "if I might make so bold as to suggest something, there's one as has been forgot."

I never heard Jinn speak such bad grammar before. Even I noticed it, and I am no authority. Something was the matter with Jinn.

"What's forgot, Jinn, the gloves? Mother's or mine?"

"No, it's not the gloves, it's Miss Maggie downstairs."

"Maggie? What have I to do with her?"

"She's a civil-spoken girl," continued Jinn. "I don't think she has the usual dislike of her race against the—the Chinese, for instance."

"Well, Jinn, what of that?"

"I think she's put out about something. Maybe

it's the door-bell. This wholesale order must have put her about a bit, as she says."

"Was she the one that said 'as has been forgot'? It's her grammar."

"She did that," said Jinn. This last was probably her idiom also. "She was quite cross-spoken just now, to me, over something."

"Why, Jinn, she always speaks of you as 'that blessed jintleman.'"

"She wouldn't then to-day," protested Jinn.

"Didn't you give her five dollars?"

"The effect of that is gone long ago. She deserves something more."

"I'm not posted about Maggie. Give her what you like," I said. I was more interested in the mortgage just at that time.

"Thank you, sir," said Jinn.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*FOLLOWED BY THANKSGIVING.*

ONE day, shortly afterwards, when I was in mother's room, Maggie burst in, decked in silk attire, of all the colors of the rainbow, and with her hat on, a new one, as if expecting to go out immediately.

"What is the matter, Maggie, are you going to leave us? What's wrong?" asked mother.

Maggie, on the street, was always a well-dressed, respectable-looking woman, but on this occasion she appeared quite handsome.

"Niver a bit will I be after leaving ye," said Maggie. "I'm just dressed up to be after showin' ye. Do ye see me clothes? Ain't they illegant?"

"When did you buy them?" asked mother.

"Divil a bit did I buy them. It's all that blessed jintleman. He says as how I oughtn't to be neglected when all the rest is being dressed up so fine, so he just reminds Mr. Thomas about it, and Mr. Thomas

makes me a present. I've me own opinion of who gives it, though. See me illegant silk dress, and me new hat, and me kid gloves even, and shoes and silk stockings with embroidery on 'em, and me breastpin (me watch and chain I had), and me rings. One of 'em's a diament or I'm a sinner."

Mother looked somewhat surprised, but admired Maggie's finery enough to satisfy her. Turning to me after Maggie had gone, she was about to speak.

"I didn't do it," I hastened to say. "It was that foolish Jinn. I said he could give what he liked."

"He must be well off himself. He doesn't look it," said mother.

Jinn was personally interested in all of these transactions. I had never seen him so smiling before. He seemed more willing also. He was rather sorry that I did not call him more often. He took a pride in seeing me try on all my new finery and asked about mother's. He did not mention Maggie, so I told him how pleased she was.

"She told me herself the first day," said Jinn. "I hadn't time to say 'What do you wish' at the door, before she began right on me. She almost hugged me. It wasn't my fault, you know."

My mention of it seemed pleasing to Jinn, outside

of Maggie's sentiments. He was in such a good humor that he made a suggestion, almost of his own accord ; at least, he led up to it.

" Did the money come for your mother ? " he asked.

" It has." Sharp & Allofamind had sent mother a check for a moderate amount, with a message that the same amount would be forthcoming monthly.

" I suppose you are not out of money yourself," said Jinn.

" Yes, I am short."

" Boss said that I might lead you up to asking for some for yourself, if I wanted to, if I didn't actually tell you to do so."

" Oh, thank you, Jinn. Do bring me some. No matter how good clothes you have, or how much you have to eat, you feel mean if you don't have some money in your pocket. It's like having your shoes shined when you feel dirty or tired. It rests you at once. You feel clean all over. Ready money in your pocket makes you feel good, even if you don't use it. You can't even go to the theater without ready money ; at least, I can't."

" It shall be attended to," Jinn said.

Just about this time we had another visit from Miss Golden. Mother had never ceased to speak of her

since her former visit, or to wish that she would come again as she promised.

"She is such a dear girl. So gentle and sunny. I always wished for a daughter. She is just what I longed for."

Miss Golden asked for mother, and ran up to mother's room unannounced. She kissed mother and said :

"I am so glad to see you again. It is just like seeing ma. You are two people just alike."

Mother was sewing, but it was not on the hard drudgery for the shops, but on some little work for herself, fitting up some of her new finery. Mother would insist that Miss Golden should see all the new outfit ; mother's part, you know, so it took about two hours to do that. Miss Golden was so interested that it was hard for mother to stop. If anything, Miss Golden took more interest in them than I did. She complimented my selections, which pleased mother greatly. Altogether, they had a regular time of it.

When they got through, Miss Golden thought she must go.

"Bless me," she said, "I almost forgot what I came for. It was on business for pa. I heard him tell ma, and I asked him to let me attend to it, as I knew you. He got your message."



"My message?" queried mother. "About what?"

"Why, the mortgage, you know," Miss Golden replied.

"I didn't send any message."

"Well, your son did, then. It's all the same. You knew about it. It was your business."

"What was it about?" mother asked.

"The mortgage, you know."

"The mortgage? Our mortgage?"

"Yes, the mortgage on this house. You know pa bought it."

"I was not aware of it."

"Yes, he says he bought it a short time ago, for an investment. Pa was hunting for something, and it was offered to him. It was a good one, and he bought it."

"I suppose I have been notified, but I had forgotten it," mother replied. "Things have been in such a whirl lately. The fact is, I have not paid the interest regularly lately. At the present time there is some back interest due, so I have not made any payments to the new holder. I had expected to pay the interest this week. I now have the money ready. I suppose this will be satisfactory?"

"Oh, quite so, I suppose. Pa don't want it. That wasn't the question."

"What was it then, my dear?"

"About paying off the mortgage."

"Paying off the mortgage?" repeated mother.

"Does your father want it paid off? My dear, it would be impossible, just at present. Please use your influence with him not to press it."

"He don't want it paid off. He wants to hold it. He won't know what to do with the money when you pay it. It's only you that wants it paid."

"Me?" asked mother incredulously.

"You, or your son. It's the same thing. Pa says if you insist upon it, he supposes he'll have to let you pay it, to satisfy you, but he don't want to. He'll only have to hunt up another investment. He's got as much in railroads as he wants. He likes private mortgages."

"I don't believe Thomas sent any such message. He did not say anything to me about it," said mother.

"I understand that it was from him or by his orders. He probably wants to surprise you. He must certainly be fond of his mother. It's a good trait. Do you want the mortgage paid?" Miss Golden asked.

"That's what I have been trying for all my life since my husband died."

"Then pa shall take the money."

"But where will we get it from to send him?"

"Why, mother," said Miss Golden, affectionately, "pa's got the money. The check was sent to him in your name, asking him to take it. It's only a question of sending it back to you or sending you the satisfied mortgage. Which shall it be?"

"The mortgage, my dear Miss Golden; do get him to send me the mortgage. Please do."

"I will bring it to you myself, for the pleasure of it. All I can say is that your son must be a fine young man and an honor to you. He must be a nice fellow, for he's an amateur photographer. All amateur photographers are, you know," said Miss Golden, smiling.

"Are you one?" asked mother, smiling also.

"Yes, I'm one, I'll admit."

"And a cyclist?"

"No, I don't plead guilty to that. I understand, though, that all cycle people clique together in the same way."

When mother told me of the conversation, my opinion of Miss Golden was higher by several degrees than it was before. Miss Golden might think better of me, too, but I could not be blind to the fact that between herself and me there was a great social gulf,

notwithstanding that mother loved Miss Golden as a daughter.

“She called me mother,” was mother’s fond comment.

What should I do to bridge this gulf?

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## TO PASTURES NEW.

MISS GOLDEN brought the canceled mortgage as promised. After they had had a quiet little rejoicing, with some weeping, among themselves, they called me in. Mother leaned on my shoulder before Miss Golden, and thanked me, and seemed proud of me. I tell you it was a thing worth doing. I never knew there was so much in it before. I believe I'd rather have seen mother get that mortgage, particularly from Miss Golden, than to have had a new improved bicycle. I had been thinking about one for some time, by-the-way.

We burned up the mortgage between us. Miss Golden told mother that the check covered all charges for back interest and all expenses. I didn't deny it, but it was the first I knew about that part of it.

There was one way by which I thought I could get more into Miss Golden's set, and be more likely to be

received some day as a friend, even if I did not succeed in becoming very wealthy. Our house was an old-fashioned affair, comfortable enough in its way, but it was not in an aristocratic neighborhood. Even in father's time the street was not counted a good one. He didn't care particularly about that, as he was not very wealthy. He wanted something convenient to his business. We could not afford anything more expensive. Unless Jinn could furnish more income, we could not run a larger house, which would proportionately increase all running expenses, to say nothing of increased cost in furnishing. But I inferred from Jinn's remarks that our future, though with his assistance, would largely depend upon our own exertions, hence my anxiety to get into a good comfortable position.

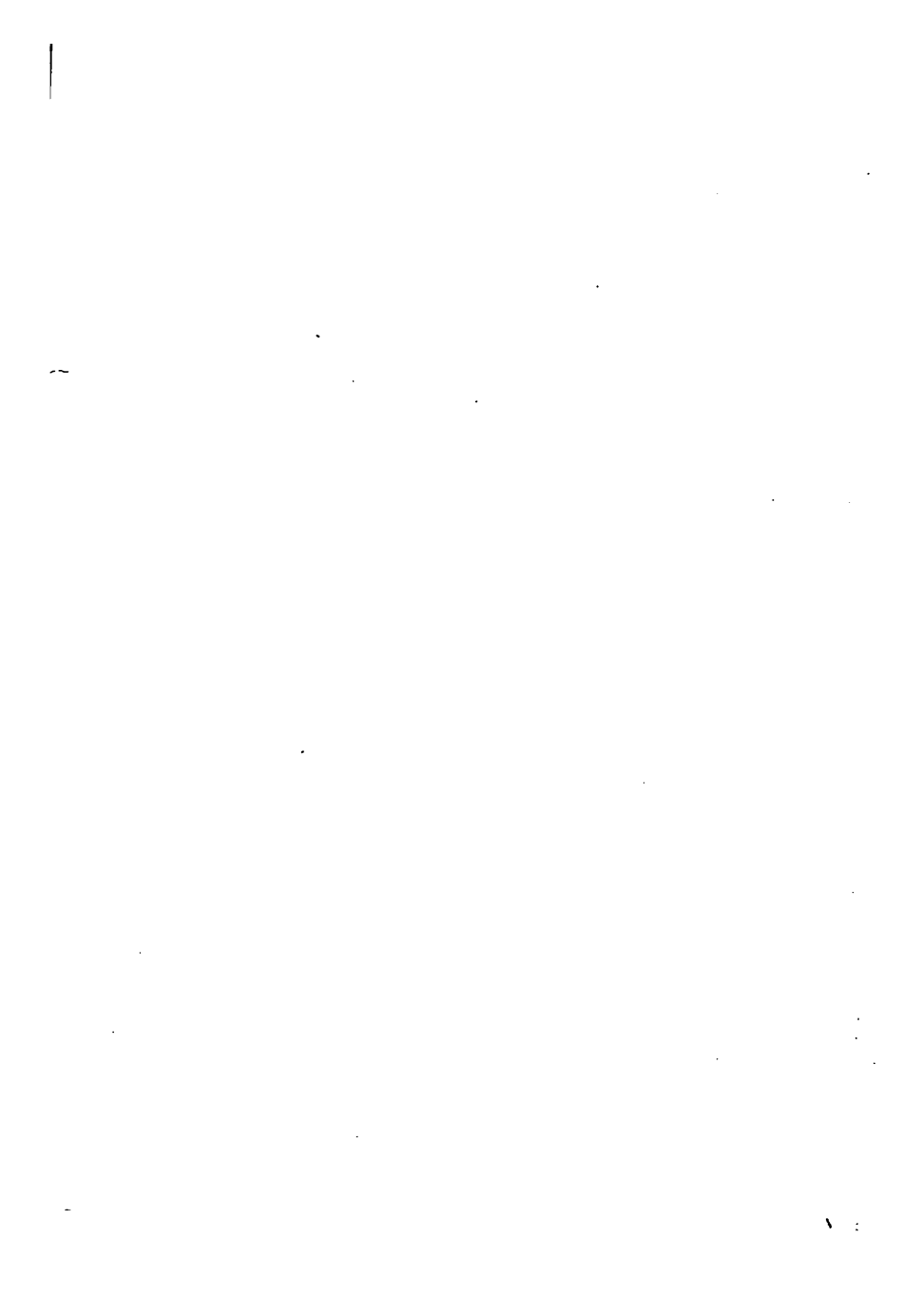
If our house had only been in a better neighborhood, it was good enough for our means. The neighborhood would not increase the running expense, though the house would have been more valuable.

I went upstairs and rubbed the lamp, while thinking about it, without intending to. Jinn appeared, and I had to apologize. I stated what had been in my mind.

"What good would it do to move your residence unless you moved your pew in church?" asked Jinn.



“Get out of here,” said Mr. Golden.—p. 173.





True enough, I had not thought of that. We could never be anybody while we sat in the gallery.

"But perhaps we can get a pew downstairs now. Mother and I——"

I stopped because I saw Jinn frown.

"Perhaps I could make up the extra expense out of my allowance," I added, discreetly.

"What good would that do without moving the house?" asked Jinn.

"Could you move the house, Jinn?"

"Nothing easier."

"Take it up bodily and move it with us in it?"

"How far?" asked Jinn.

"Well, say somewhere in the neighborhood where the Goldens live, for instance."

"That's only child's play. Do you want it moved?"

"If it's possible, I certainly do."

"Where do you want it put, on top of somebody else's or on the ground? It's got to go somewheres, you know," remarked Jinn.

"I should prefer the ground, Jinn, if it's all the same to you. I don't like flats."

"Where's the ground?"

"You get it," I said, boldly.

"Oh! Why didn't you say so? I'll look out for a

lot and let you know. This lot you are on is worth something. I suppose you'll exchange?"

"I think mother will. It belongs to her."

Jinn found a suitable lot at reasonable price. Mother raised no objection, but did not exactly like the idea of being put out of the house while the moving was going on. Though I did not mention Miss Golden's name, I think mother thought of her when moving was proposed. She evidently wanted to stand as well as any one or have me do so. Her ambition woke up suddenly again, after she was released from the drudgery, had an income, and owned the house entire.

The apparent advantages of the lot selected were not greater than what we had already. It was slightly larger, but the outlook and surroundings were no more elegant. It was not on a very fashionable street, but the point was that it was in a part of the city that was regarded as "the thing." That settled it. The exchange of lots was effected. I suppose Jinn paid the difference. Anyhow, mother got the deed. One morning when we awoke there was a perfect army of workmen around the house. Before we knew it, the foundations were dug away, we were mounted on jacks, and afterwards on rollers, and were gradually moving out into the middle of

the street. Everything went on in the house as usual. Nothing was disturbed. No dust entered. Everything was kept tightly shut by the workmen, who were very careful. The tradesmen left their wares at the back door as usual, no matter where the back door was. The only thing at all different, which Maggie complained of, was that there was no cellar. She opened the cellar door and was about to go down when she found there were no stairs and nothing but the street paving below.

Early in the day, a policeman wanted to arrest the head workman for obstructing the highway, but a permit signed by the proper authorities was at once shown. During the day I visited the new lot. There was another army of workmen there, building a new foundation.

It took an incredibly short time for the house to reach the new locality, though as we sat within looking out of the window at the houses we were passing, the motion was not perceptible. It had, necessarily, to be quick work, or the city authorities would not have allowed the obstruction of the streets. Before we knew it, we were in our new location, and everything was in working order, as if we had always lived there. We never had any particular friends in the old place, so there was nothing to lose. If we

were able to make any in the new, it would be so much clear gain.

In speaking of the removal, mother expressed great satisfaction. She knew, of course, where the money came from that paid for it.

"It appears to me," she said, "that that man, your friend, must have owed your father a power of money. That accounts for it. Your father never could get along. From what the lawyer said I thought you were only going to be furnished with knick-knacks. But it's something more substantial. It's steady income, the mortgage paid, provisions and living furnished, lot bought, house moved, and clothes purchased. I only hope it will last. It's my opinion that we had better be saving up against a rainy day, now we have the house secure. But I am glad to get into this neighborhood. I was not always poor. I'm more used to what we have now."

Mother, it may be said, came from a very good family, which had been reduced in circumstances when she was younger.

"But there's one thing else, mother," I said. "We're going to move our seats in church, perhaps."

"Downstairs?" asked mother.

"Downstairs, mother."

"Well, if there was any one thing left that I de-

sired more than another, I think it would be to have a downstairs pew again, like it was in your father's time," was mother's glad remark.

"It shall be done, mother, if there's one vacant. I'm going to pay for it out of my allowance."

Mother kissed me gently and looked her thanks, but said nothing. I knew just how she felt, but how it came about that I was able to feel it, I could not tell.

The next Sunday, when I entered the church, we found one of the ushers on the lookout for us. He said he would show us our new pew. He took us up the central aisle, and showed us to a seat, comfortably furnished with nice cushions, stools, fans, book-racks, and books. The books all had our family name, "Jackson," stamped in gold letters on the binding. One of them, which mother picked up, had a note in it addressed to me. She handed it over and I opened it. Inside was a receipted bill for one year's pew-rent. This was real kind of Jinn. I did not have to pay it out of my allowance after all. I was glad of it. The pew was not as far forward as Mr. Golden's or Stringer's, but that was the good of it. A church is not like a theater where the show is in front. In church, if you're in front, you are seen and can't see anything. If you are back, you can watch every one.

Besides, if the seat had been forward, mother would have thought it beyond her station. As it was, she was as pleased as Punch. It was nice to see her with such surroundings.

After we were comfortably settled in our new neighborhood, mother remarked that she hoped it would be possible to make some friends and enjoy a little social intercourse once more, which for so many years she had no chance to cultivate. The next-door house was vacant at present. I suggested that possibly Miss Golden might look in occasionally, which remark set mother off.

"Miss Golden is a dear girl. I wish you were her equal and liked such company," she said to me.

"How do you know, mother, but that I may be her equal some day? Why are you so sure that I do not like her?"

"Of course she's far above you, with her advantages, but she's such a lovely girl. If I could only some day have a daughter-in-law like her, my cup of happiness would be full."

"Mother, I'll tell you a secret. Though I have no idea that she will ever be a daughter-in-law to you, it has long been my wish to be counted her social equal. I should like nothing better."

"Then, my dear boy," said my mother, "why don't

you turn over a new leaf and try. I'm sure you can succeed. You have had great advantages lately, and you have been a fine son in remembering me so much. But you must admit that you have not acted wisely, so far, in planning for a suitable occupation in life. You have neglected your schooling. You have been lazy. If you were to turn to study even yet, you might do well. Or, if you won't do that, try to get into some honorable occupation, in which you can show industry. It will be the making of you. That would give you position and ease in society, so that you can be admitted anywhere. If you had been industrious, you would now about be through college, and about to choose a profession. You're old enough."

I promised mother to consider the matter seriously.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE PRINCESS BADROULBOUDOUR.

NOT many days afterwards mother reported that the next-door house was going to be occupied, she hoped with sociable people. It had been cleaned. Later, furniture was sent there, all new.

"A bride," said mother. "I know it. See if it isn't."

It did not prove to be a bride. An elderly woman, a housekeeper, probably, and a servant appeared.

"It will be a boarding-house, mother," I observed.

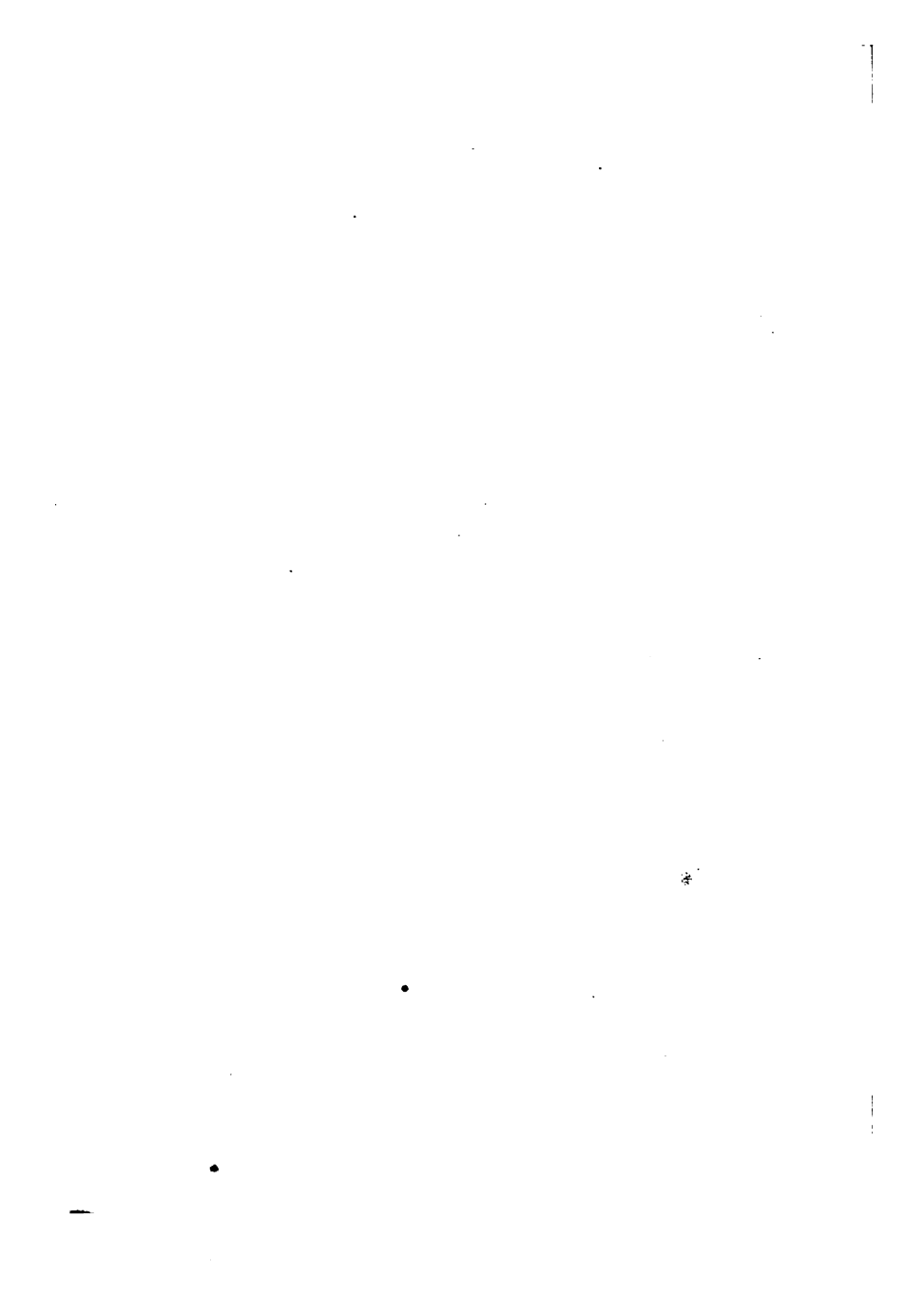
"No," said mother. "There's a gentleman lives there, a young man. There will be a bride some day, mark my words. This is only a temporary arrangement. They don't fix up in that way for men and housekeepers. He's getting the house ready. The bride will be there."

I felt some interest in the matter, having nothing else to occupy me. When I saw the gentleman





"Who in the mischief is Mr. Thomas Jackson?"—p. 184.



leaving the house early one evening, I followed him to get a look at his face. When I had a favorable opportunity I passed him and looked at him closely. As sure as fate, it was Stringer. At once I had a certain suspicion, and I again lagged behind and followed him. As I had mistrusted, he went straight for Miss Golden's house. I must look into this matter. I laid in wait for him at about the same hour on several evenings. He came out of the house and took the same road, direct to Miss Golden's. Though really it was none of my business, I could not help but feel very bad over this discovery. Why? Well, for one thing I knew it was against Miss Golden's wishes. Had she not said that she disliked him? But in that case why did she allow him to come so often? Perhaps he had railroad business with Mr. Golden. Mr. Golden hated Stringer, I knew, but still, railroad men had to be together. Why did they not transact business at their places of business? That might not look well in representatives of rival lines. I wished that I was in the railroad business.

On moving into our new location I had made a new arrangement with Jinn. When called, he had been accustomed to say over his formula both to Maggie and me. I now ordered that he say it only once and that outside the house, before ringing the bell. This

he refused to do, flatly, saying it was as much as his place was worth. It was not regulations. We finally compromised, and he agreed to begin his string as soon as he rang the bell, before the door was opened, so that he would be through before Maggie could answer. He had been wasting much time at the doorway, going over his useless password formula and gossiping afterwards.

At the first call under the new arrangement, Maggie twitted him on being so silent. He had finished the formula before she arrived. He could not repeat it to the same person. That also was prohibited.

"To think of an illegant jintleman losing his speech like that," said Maggie; but she soon found out the difficulty.

Maggie knew Jinn's ring. She now answered it so quickly as sometimes to catch him at "both I and the other experts of the lamp syndicate," or even before he was that far along. She excused her haste by remarking to me,

"It would be a shame to have the poor jintleman talking to himself out there in the cold."

I called Jinn one day, expressly to consider the question of our next-door neighbor.

"Is there no way to abate the nuisance?" I asked.

"Is he a good man or a wicked man?" asked Jinn.

"So far as my knowledge goes, Jinn, he is a wicked man."

"Then we can help you down him. What's the orders?"

"I want to do something to get him out of my way."

"Out of your way with Miss Golden, eh?"

"Miss Golden is nothing to me, Jinn, any more than any other nice young lady. I would like to protect any one from that low fellow's impudence."

"The same old story," said Jinn. "You can't fool me. Miss Golden's the difficulty. We've done that work before."

"Well, Jinn, to save argument, I'll let you think what you choose. But do think of something to down that fellow. If, as you say, I'm in love with Miss Golden, I'd certainly want him out of the way. No one could be ashamed of that. But I'm not the equal of Miss Golden."

"The more fool you, then, for not making yourself her equal. You'd have more trouble with the old man than her."

"And he wouldn't be favorable?"

"Not unless you were a railroad man like Stringer," said Jinn.

"And a rival?" I asked.

"That wouldn't count. He'd hate you while you rivaled him, but he could soon scoop you and your road in, and pull together. Then he wouldn't object to his daughter's marrying."

"Say, Jinn, there are no railroads for sale anywhere, are there, that I could buy?"

"None at present. You'd have to lay for one."

"How?"

"Buy up a majority of the stock and manipulate it. Work for mismanagement and war on the road, until the price is down, and people want to sell the stock. Then buy until you have enough. You don't have to buy all the stock. With a majority you can do whatever you please."

"Does Stringer own his road, Jinn?"

"No. He's largely interested, though. He hadn't money enough. He owns more than any one other stockholder. It would take a combination of stockholders to get a majority against him."

"Is any of that stock ever offered for sale?" I asked.

"Sometimes."

"Then, Jinn, if there is enough money available at present, go buy up every share you can lay eyes on."

"That wouldn't do. It would send up the price

at once, and would make people hold on to it," said Jinn.

"What would you do, then?"

"Lay low, and get a share here and a share there."

"I'll leave it to you, Jinn; but how can I get into the railroad business?"

"Why, that's getting into the railroad business, dummy. If you get a control, you can vote yourself into any position. What more do you want?"

"And at any salary?"

"Certainly, if the road will stand it."

"Then, Jinn, I think we're on the right track at last. That will just about suit me."

In about two days, Jinn returned and reported: "Not one share of stock can be purchased by fair means. You must agree to my methods, if you want to get any."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## PLOTING AGAINST THE MAGICIAN.

JINN's methods were rather cruel. He suggested, among other things, that he could cause a series of severe accidents on the Rival Short Line, which would so seriously damage the road, at least for a time, as to injure the value of its stock. If the stock went down, some of the holders would be anxious to sell.

In the olden time, Jinn could have worked differently. To get the stock, it would only have been necessary to gain access by some means to the place where the certificates were kept, and walk off with them bodily, without permission. But now, strong bank vaults, guarded day and night, prevented such methods. This was Jinn's lament.

I pointed out to him that even if the objection were removed, he could not work in that way, as the stock was registered. Mere possession of the certificates



was nothing. A clear title would have to be shown before the shares could be transferred to my name on the books of the company, so as to do me any good.

I suggested that Jinn's proposed plan was dangerous, and might be accompanied with danger to life.

"That's all right," said Jinn. "You'll be all right if it's in a good cause. You won't suffer. If this man, Stringer, is not a rascal, as you claim, then you'll have to take the risk yourself. If he is, nothing will probably go wrong with you. What's the difference if a few people, more or less, should get hurt or even killed? There are plenty to spare in the world. There are more than are needed."

I could not quite follow Jinn's reasoning, so asked if there was not some other way.

Jinn then suggested that he get up a strike on the road, which would injure it badly.

"But it wouldn't get over the effects of that so readily," I suggested. I was afraid that after I did get the control of the road, it might not be of value, and so I might lose something.

As Jinn acknowledged that this might be the case, the proposed strike was not considered.

"It would be fun to get up a little excitement on the Short Line," Jinn insinuated. "There is not

much risk of any one being hurt. You wouldn't be known in the matter, anyhow."

"Can you guarantee that no one will be hurt?" I asked.

"No," said Jinn, "I cannot. But the risk of it is not greater than you take every day."

I knew from this remark that Jinn knew something that I was trying to keep quiet. Since I had left school I had considerable leisure on my hands. To fill up some of this, I had joined a social club of young fellows, who were not exactly the kind that mother preferred, though they were wealthy. I insisted that they would assist me to get into good society. Mother begged me not to have so much to do with them, but she did not know anything about them: how could she? She had never spoken to them in her life. I knew them well. Besides, was I not old enough to take care of myself if there was any danger? Mothers are so awfully fussy over things they know nothing about.

I soon found the members of this club did nothing but gamble, but I rather liked that after I got used to it, now that I had a little money. Sometimes I could make more in that way, sometimes I lost a little. It was a very pleasant way to fill up time, at any rate.

My funds were short at this time from this cause.

If Jinn could be kept in a good humor, it might be a good chance to ask for a little more than my allowance. As I had now arranged it, this came regularly every month like mother's. It was therefore desirable to defer to him. If he had set his mind on the accidents, I did not like to thwart him. He liked the idea. It reminded him of old times. I found that he would not make a very great row if I asked for a little more money, so I ordered both the money and the accidents.

"How will you work the accidents, Jinn? I suppose you will put an obstruction on the track to wreck a train."

"Oh, no," said Jinn. "That might be noticed and removed. If successful, it would be sure to injure people. Besides, that would only show spite work or the work of robbers. It wouldn't injure the road's credit. No, the proper way is to undermine something, to weaken a bridge, or something of that kind. If it gives way, it would probably be only the engine that would go through. The engineer and fireman will jump and save themselves. They are used to such things. That would give an idea that the road is poorly built, or worn out. When the stockholders come to believe that, they will know that money will be needed for repairs, and that prob-

ably more accidents will happen before they are completed, all costing money. This will cut down the dividends. I shouldn't wonder if we could do the work with one accident. If we can get up a panic, that's all we want. We can then buy all the stock we want."

"When will the first accident be, Jinn? I want to see it."

"Better not know too much about it. I'll make it as near this end of the road as possible for your accommodation."

After Jinn had sent me the extra money, I went off to the club. I stayed out all night. When I came home in the morning, mother looked very solemn. She thought I had been drinking, but I hadn't. I was only sleepy. I went straight to bed and never woke up all day. When I did get up, I wanted Jinn for something—I can't remember just now what it was. When I went to unlock the closet in which I kept the lamp, I failed to find the key. I felt rather cross, so instead of hunting for it I thought it would be easier to go down and blame mother. I had probably dropped it out of my pocket, but even in that case, when they found it, they should have returned it to me at once. "Who else could they think it belonged to?" I asked.

Mother saw that I was in a bad humor.

"Never mind," she said, to comfort me, "if you can't find the key, it's an easy matter to get a locksmith to open the door. I wouldn't break it open."

"I wish you'd attend to getting the man, then," I said. "It's an awful nuisance."

Mother said she would do so gladly, so I left it to her. Next day, all of a sudden, I wanted something of Jinn. Mother said she had not yet had time to see the locksmith.

I said something disagreeable probably, for she replied :

"Why, Thomas, if you were in such a hurry for it, you should have attended to it yourself."

"But you said you would do it, mother."

"So I will if you wish it," she said. "I will go right now."

She put on her wraps and bonnet and started off, while I waited for her at home. It was dull waiting. One of our club fellows stopped for me, and I went out with him. When I returned, several hours later, I forgot the key until just as I was going out again. Thinking of it as I was about leaving the house, I called to mother for it, as it was easier than going after it.

"It is in the closet door, Thomas."

"But I want it," I said.

"I'll go get it for you," she replied.

"All right, I wish you would."

She ran up to my room. I wanted to know that the lamp was safe, but it was such a trouble to climb the stairs. What was the use if mother was willing to climb for me? There was nothing of any value in the closet except the lamp, nothing to attract attention.

Mother brought me the key.

"Is the closet locked, mother?"

"I don't know, Thomas. I didn't try it. I'll go and see for you."

She went, but I did not wait. She would lock it, if not already locked. Mother was sure to do whatever she undertook.

I happened to think later, that as I had the key with me and it was not a spring lock, mother could not lock the door. She could only find out whether it was open or not. If open she would tell me later. I thought nothing more of it, because I had a scheme on foot, suggested by my card-playing.

This was nothing less than to use my knowledge of what was to happen to the Rival Short Line as a matter of profit to myself. The parents of the club fellows were interested either in one road or the

other. It would be easy to set them by the ears and get them to bet on the prospects of the rival roads. I could claim to have inside information that within a certain time the stock of the Short Line would decrease in value. It was now holding its own bravely. It would be as much fun as staking money on cards. It would be something like the Stock Exchange.

I found that the bait took. The fellows whose fathers were interested in the Short Line thought themselves well posted as to the plans of its management, and they were sure that its stock would continue to advance. I found ready takers for all the bets I could make. All the money I had was put up. I wanted more badly, but did not like asking Jinn for any, so soon after the extra allowance.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN.

As it was not advisable to ask Jinn for more money at that time, I thought of mother. She might spare me a little, until the end of the quarter. I hurried home to ask her.

"Mother," I said, "I need some money at once. I have a chance to make a big pile if you will only help me. I can't get any anywhere else at present. Please give me some. You surely do not need money as much as I do. You have everything you want."

"I have only thirty dollars in the house," mother said, "and I——"

"That will just about do ; mother, do let me have it. You'll be all right by the end of the month. I must have it. Please don't ask me anything about it now, I can't tell you, but let me have the money."

"Must you have all of it?" mother asked. "I should like to have a part of it."



"Why, mother, that is so little. You surely wouldn't deny it to me when I need it so much, after all I've done for you."

Mother of course did not like to appear ungrateful. I knew I had her there, so she gave me the money.

"Where is Sharp & Allofamind's?" she asked.

"Surely you are not going there to ask them to advance you money?"

"But where is it, Thomas? You do not object to telling? I could find it in the directory, you know. Why should I not know?"

To satisfy her I gave her an address, but a wrong one.

"Can you ride there?" mother asked.

"Yes, take the Montrose horse-car. Keep on until you get to the end of the route, then any one can tell you."

Mother did need the money she gave me badly, but she would not say so. The facts came out afterwards. Miss Golden had gotten her interested in a church charity scheme. They were going to have some kind of a sale or festival for the benefit of something or other. Mother had promised a donation. It was the first time for years that she had been able to do such a thing. Miss Golden saw how much pleasure it gave and encouraged it. The money

that mother was to give was to be spent for materials, which she and Miss Golden were to manufacture into certain articles. That afternoon Miss Golden was to call for mother. They were to go shopping together. After making such promises, and for the first time, too, mother did not want to say that it was not convenient, nor did she want to disappoint me. She proposed to see what could be done at the lawyers' where the checks came from, whether they could not advance the amount for a few days.

With this end in view, as soon as I left the house, she started out on this errand, intending to return in time to meet Miss Golden.

She took the car as directed.

"Is this the Montrose car?" she asked of the conductor.

"It is, ma'am," said he. "Where do you want to go to?"

"To the end of the route," said mother.

The conductor said nothing further. She sat in the car, while it went on and on, until she was the only passenger left in it. By this time she was in the suburbs and had been riding nearly an hour.

"Do you stop here?" she asked, as the car came to a halt and she saw the conductor preparing to leave it.

"This is the terminus, ma'am."

"Where is Sharp & Allofamind's?"

"Don't know any such people, ma'am."

"The lawyers."

"Out here?"

"Near the end of your line I was told."

"Oh, it must have been the other end down town. There are no lawyers' offices out here. This is Montrose."

Even if mother had been at the other end, she would have been in a like fix, for she did not have the correct address. To be sure, she would have been nearer to the lawyers' office, but she would have had trouble to find it.

"How long will it take me to get back?" asked mother.

"As long as it took out, at least."

"I can never get there and home in time," thought mother. "Miss Golden will be waiting."

"If you're in a hurry, ma'am, there's a way-train on the railroad that stops at this station in about five minutes. It will take you right into town in about fifteen more."

"Oh, thank you," said mother. "That will just suit. Show me the way."

The man did so. The train came along promptly on time, and mother got into it. It was a suburban

way-train on the Great American System. Mother felt delighted that she got out of the difficulty so easily. I was very sorry, when I knew of it, that I had given her all this extra trouble.

In the mean time, I had been busily occupied at the club in placing the thirty dollars to the best advantage. If Jinn's plan worked well I should have plenty of money.

I was at the club when I first heard of the accident. Newsboys along the street were crying: "Terrible accident on the Rival Short Line."

This was nothing unusual. The boys were perpetually calling something of that kind, whether there was any accident or not. I bought a paper. The headings in immense black letters said :

FIFTH EDITION.

TERRIBLE RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

THE RIVAL SHORT LINE THE SCENE.

MANY LIVES LOST.

BELIEVED TO BE THOUSANDS MISSING.

NARRATIVE OF EYE-WITNESSES.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS.

FULL PARTICULARS.

Under the headings was a small paragraph, which was all the news there was, as follows :

“ A dispatch has just come over the wires stating that an accident of some kind has occurred on the Rival Short Line at a point which cannot yet be ascertained. It is thought to be serious. There may be some loss of life. Particulars in later editions.”

I took the paper into the club-room and showed it to the fellows.

“ There’s a big accident on the Rival Short Line,” I said. “ There goes the stock down to begin with right away. You can pay up as soon as you like.”

“ If you knew there was going to be an accident so soon, you must be the fellow that caused it,” said one. “ You were betting on a certainty.”

“ No,” said another, “ but that fellow don’t get around me. I sha’n’t pay a single bet, not now at least. That isn’t his game, fellows, but I’ll tell you what it is. He gets a lot of bets out, then goes down to the office of this disreputable little paper and pays them to put this dispatch in. Or he may have sent it to them himself. It sells their papers anyhow. They’re ready enough to insert it. There isn’t a word of truth in it. After the paper is out, he comes in

here, scoops up all the bets, gets them paid before there can be any denial, and that's all he wants. You can see for yourself, by reading the paper, that the whole thing's a fraud. There's nothing in the news after you get it. It's all in the head-lines, which are intended to do duty for the news after they get it, if they do. That is as they expect it to be. If it isn't up to the head-lines, no matter. You will find that the whole thing will be contradicted in a little while."

I waited patiently for the next edition of the paper. A boy came along with it after an interval. It was called the tenth edition. The additional news was :

"Later dispatches infer that the accident on the Rival Short Line was at the 'Bellevue Crossing,' in the neighborhood of this city. Our reporters have started for the scene, but have not yet been heard from. The officials at the Company's office will give no information. It is certain that there has been some accident, though, as far as we can hear, no loss of life. If that had occurred, it would now be known. It could not be kept quiet."

"Well," said one of the fellows, "it can't be much of an accident, not enough to depress the stock, anyhow."

I was determined I would find out all about it for myself, so left the club-house, intending to find where the Bellevue Crossing was and go there. I went to the station of the Rival Short Line, to take a train to the spot. At the ticket office I was sold a ticket for the Crossing, but told afterwards that the train would not start immediately, that the road was blocked. It would be open shortly. I waited for a time, then thought:

“What is the use of waiting here? Why not go home, call Jinn, and find out all about it in that way?”

That was a good suggestion. I took a street-car for home. Arriving there, I found no one but Maggie.

I did not ask for mother, as I did not want her particularly. I was going direct to my room, when Maggie stopped me.

“Where’s your mother, Mr. Thomas?”

“I don’t know, Maggie. Do you expect her?”

“She said she’d be back long before this. She had an engagement with Miss Golden. Miss Golden’s been here, been waiting, and been gone long ago. Didn’t know what to do with her. You should ’a been here to liven her. You’d ’a liked it, and I guess she’d ’a liked it better, too.”

"How long has Miss Golden been gone, Maggie?"

"About an hour. It's no use trying to catch her now. You've missed the bird this time. She didn't want you. It was your mother."

"Never mind, Maggie. I'll catch her some other time."

"Be sure you do," returned Maggie, "or, by the powers, you'll disappoint your mother, ye will, and that's sure."

"Shut up, Maggie," I replied, and went upstairs.

I took the key from my pocket to insert it in the closet door. Something prevented it from turning. After fooling with it a while I gave the door a pull and it came open easily. It had not been locked.

"That's mother's fault. She said she would find out if it was locked and let me know," I said aloud.

"But she couldn't. I didn't wait," I thought again.

"Yes, she could. I saw her when I asked for the money. She could have told me then." That was a hasty interview, but I had forgotten that.

It was of little moment if the closet had been locked or not, if I only was more careful to lock it myself in future. I opened the door wide.

The lamp, however, did not appear to be there.



The closet had been planned for a clothes-press. It had one shelf above and a row of hooks below. On one of these hooks I always hung the lamp, by the handle. If it had fallen down, as it sometimes did when I hung it back on the hook in a hurry, it would have been in the bottom of the closet. I looked carefully everywhere, but could not find it.

"Maggie," I shouted, "has any one been to the closet in my room? Maggie! Come here, will you, quick."

Maggie came, running.

"Do you know anything of that old metal gravy boat that was hanging in this closet?" I asked, pointing to the hook where it had hung.

"Never a bit," said Maggie. "We've got all the gravy boats we want downstairs now. What would I want with it?"

"You know, Maggie, that old thing that used to hang in the parlor with ribbons on it."

"Right well I do," said Maggie. "I've blessed the old thing many a time, when I've had to dust the parlor and it would come clattering down. It was only hung on a tack. I was right glad when you took it upstairs. I thought it was gone by this time, but was afraid to ask for fear some one would bring it back. I had no notion you still had it. What's it

good for, anyhow? What do you want with the old thing?"

"That's my business, Maggie."

"Mother will know where it is," I thought. As mother was not home, there was nothing to do but wait for her.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MOTHER IS LOST.

THE accident turned out more serious than was expected, though it was not so very bad. As I could do nothing at home until mother arrived, I went back to the station and inquired of a porter if the road was open yet.

"It's broke for all day," said he. "Where do you want to go to?"

"Bellevue Crossing," I said.

"Bellevue Crossing? Are you a reporter?"

"No."

"Then you'd better keep away from Bellevue Crossing. There's too big a crowd there now. They can't work. That's where the wreck is."

"Where is Bellevue Crossing?" I asked.

"Why, it's not five miles out. If you must get there, why don't you walk or take the street-cars."

In that case the street-cars were certainly the best. I acted on the advice at once.

It was not very hard to find the correct line, as I knew how the various street roads ran, and which followed most closely the line of the railway. The Crossing was found without any difficulty. Once in the right car, I found it full of people, all bound for Bellevue, to see what could be seen.

Bellevue Crossing was found to be merely a railway crossing above grade. There was a short iron bridge of a single span. The bridge was down on the road below, and on top of the remnants was a derailed locomotive. Jinn was right. Nothing but the locomotive had gone through. There was a train, without locomotive, on the track above. The train was uninjured. It was empty now, of course.

"How did it happen?" I asked of a bystander.

"They say some one has been tampering with the bridge. Some bolts have been drawn, unscrewed deliberately. They won't let any one touch the wreck until they investigate, though it blocks the road. There's crooked work somewhere."

"And no one was hurt?"

"No one on the locomotive. They're searching in the smashed-up car now."

"The car? What car?"

"The car down there below. It's all in splinters."

Sure enough, when I came to look closer, there was something else below, smashed to pieces. It was like a pile of kindling wood. There were wheels lying around and pieces of track, but I supposed that they had been there before.

"I hope no one was hurt," I said. "Will they let any one go down there to see?"

"No, they won't," said the man. "I've tried. And they won't tell anything about it. They don't want it known, if there is any one hurt. They can't keep it from the reporters, though. There are thousands of accidents every day on railroads and we hear nothing of them. The employees all have orders to keep quiet. If there is no loss of life, that's easily done. If only an employee is injured, it sometimes gets into the newspapers, sometimes not. But if there is any great accident, causing great loss of property or injury to passengers, they can't control it. All the particulars come out, sooner or later."

"Will this affect the company's stock?" I asked.

"It isn't likely," I was told, "though no one can say. If it is spite-work, I do not see how it could."

As there was nothing to be gained by staying, I satisfied my curiosity and returned home. It was now late in the day, but still no mother.

I asked Maggie if mother had come home. I was anxious to ask about the lamp. But I was sure she had put it in a safe place, after she found the closet open. She was always very careful, so I gave no great thought to it.

Maggie said that as mother had an appointment with Miss Golden she might have gone direct to Miss Golden's house. Miss Golden had thought that she would do so, and, after waiting, had gone there to meet her. Miss Golden left word that if mother was there, she would be kept to dinner. "It will be too late to go shopping, but we can fill up the time working. If Mrs. Jackson is not at home in time do not expect her. I will tell her so. She will then not feel uneasy and will stay with me," was Miss Golden's message.

All this Maggie had not seen fit to tell me before. That explained the whole matter. It was no use to expect her yet.

"Will you have dinner yourself, now?" asked Maggie.

There was nothing particular to keep me at home. I could not get any information about the lamp until later in the evening. It was not particularly interesting to dine alone, so I thought I would go out again to the club. I would hear more about the

accident. I might run across an agreeable fellow who would go out and take a bite with me. Our club was only a small affair, renting apartments. It had no dining facilities. At the present time, though, I had no particular friends. It seemed so unlikely that the Rival's stock would suffer, that I succeeded in making bets with nearly every member, no matter which road they favored. For the time being they were all opponents, particularly while this accident was fresh in their minds.

At the club-house, I found they had all the latest papers and were discussing the matter vigorously.

The Crossing, I learned, was where the Short Line crossed a branch of the Great American System. The road running under the bridge which had broken was not an ordinary road, as I had supposed, but a railway. I had not noticed this. There were railway rails, wheels, and such things lying around, but I had supposed they had come from the bridge with the derailed car.

"Then both roads are blocked," I remarked.

"Both roads are blocked," I was informed, "but the American is clear now. They're awfully put out about it. They claim to be a safe line,—haven't had an accident for years. They're going to make the Rival Line sweat. They have enough influence to

do it too. The Rival people say the bridge was tampered with,—that it was no fault of theirs ; but now that the American is taking a hand, the papers, which are all under the control of the big road, publish their story. They say that it was bad construction, careless inspection, and bad management. The American will use it to injure the Rival road, and they will do it." My informant appeared to suspect me like the rest, so I said :

"Well, you can't accuse me of causing the accident. I wouldn't have known how. Besides I didn't even know where the Crossing was."

"That's all well enough," said my companion, "but you might have known that there was some plot on foot. You made a specialty of that particular assertion when there wasn't any apparent reason for it. We've compared notes, and we find you will make (if they are fair bets and are all paid) about eight hundred dollars. I, for one, won't pay and you can't make me. I won't have anything to do with a black-leg. And another thing, I propose to move that you be expelled from the club."

I found this sentiment so general among the members, either expressed openly, or shown by cool treatment, that I found it inconvenient to prolong my stay. Possibly at the newspaper offices I might find



more particulars of the accident. Until I could get the lamp I could not ask Jinn.

At the newspaper offices there were now quite long bulletins displayed, from which I gathered that there had been some loss of life, though not a great deal, and that some people had been injured.

The names of the killed were given. There was one man mentioned as "unknown." No complete list of the injured was possible. They had mostly lived in the city and had gone to their homes.

"What was the 'Rival' train that was wrecked?" I asked of a gentleman who was reading the bulletins, and who seemed posted.

"You mean the engine. It drew the way-mail from Orwigsburg."

"That was the train that was wrecked, was it not?"

"The train on the Rival Short Line was not wrecked. The engine was thrown down off the track, but was not particularly injured. No one was hurt on that train."

"Where then?"

"On the Great American. It was their car that was smashed. There was a train passing just as the bridge and engine came down on it. All that were injured were in that train."

I recollected now that the splinters of the car that I had seen were under the bridge and engine, not on it.

"What train was that on the American?" I asked.

"A suburban way-train for local passenger travel. It had just passed Montrose on its way in, the last stop before the city terminus for that train. Some of the passengers who were injured got on at that station."

I did not at that time know that mother had been near Montrose, so I did not worry about it. If I had known it, I should have hurried home, greatly frightened, for I really cared for mother. In fact I cared for her more now than I had ever done before, since we had begun to see better circumstances.

I went home rather late, after every one else was in bed. I went to my room as quietly as possible, more quietly than usual, for it was a nuisance to have to keep quiet late at night, simply to prevent other people from being disturbed. It was bad enough to have to be groping around in the dark. They might as well wait up. Then I could get in more easily and it would not disturb any one. It was their own fault if they would go to bed so early. But this night, for some reason, I thought I had better not disturb mother.

No one called to me this time to know if it was all right, as mother usually did. I went to bed and slept soundly. In the morning I went down to breakfast. Maggie said :

"You'd better be after hunting your mother, I think. You'd better see her home from Miss Golden's. It would show you cared for her, anyhow. She couldn't get here last night because there was no one to bring her home. No real lady like Miss Golden would let her go alone at night, and they had no one to send with her."

I had not thought of that. I did not want Miss Golden to think that I neglected mother. I would go after her now, and make some excuse.

"Not without your breakfast?" said Maggie. "They'll think you're crazy. They won't let her go without hers. Eat yours comfortable and then go."

Maggie was pleased when I followed her suggestion. She took particular pains to give me a good meal. After it was late enough to make it respectable, I went to Miss Golden's residence.

"Is Mrs. Jackson here?" I asked of the pompous man-servant who answered the bell.

"Mrs. Jackson does not live here. This is Mr. Golden's house."

I recollected that this was not the correct way. I should have asked for Miss Golden.

"Mrs. Jackson is a friend of Miss Golden. May I see Miss Golden for a moment?" I asked.

"Miss Golden is out," said the servant.

I looked at him as if I rather disbelieved the statement. The man noticed the look, but did not appear to care very much what I thought of him. Then, probably recollecting that it was rather early in the morning for her to be out, he added :

"She has just gone back to her father. He has not been home all night. Railroad accident, you know. He is at his office."

"Was there not an elderly lady staying with Miss Golden over night?" I asked.

"Not that I know of."

"Would any one else know?" I persisted.

"I'll ask the maid, if you like," he said.

He did not ask me in, but closed the door while I waited. It was rather early in the morning for a social call, and in my hurry to go for mother, so as to set myself right with Miss Golden, I had neglected to properly care for my personal appearance. I did not have on my best clothes, but wore what I had on when I went out to the Crossing. They were somewhat dirty. Worse than all, I had no gloves with

me. Servants in grand houses always go by appearances, if they don't know the person.

In a short time the maid appeared.

"I do not know that any one stayed here over night," she said.

"Did no one call yesterday afternoon?" I asked.

"Several people called, I think. I am not sure. There are so many of us here that a person might easily call without my knowing it."

"Did you not see any one here with Miss Golden, for quite a while yesterday afternoon, working with her?"

"There could not have been," she said. "Miss Golden was out nearly all the afternoon. When she came home late she heard of the accident and went at once to her father's office."

This was all the information I could get, so I turned homewards again. I had gotten nearly to the house when I heard some one call me, and, turning, saw mother, almost directly behind me.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## ALL IS LOST.

I GAVE a start when I saw her. I was not at all sure that it was mother when I first looked. The call had come from the driver of a closed carriage, who was on the box. The carriage had stopped in front of our door. The door of the carriage was open and two people were carrying mother between them. She sat up on their clasped hands, with her arms on their shoulders. She looked at me and smiled, but she was very pale. I hastened to inquire what was the matter.

"Let us get her into the house first," said one of the men. "She's been hurt in the accident. She's been in the hospital over night, but the doctor said she could be moved. She was anxious to get home. Get the house open. She must be put to bed."

"Where is she hurt?" I asked, anxiously.

"Internal injuries somewhere. Can't tell where yet. There's nothing shows."

This was some relief, anyhow. It could not be so bad.

They carried her upstairs and laid her on the bed. Maggie went wild.

"Where has mother been on the railroad, Maggie?" I asked.

"Don't be asking me at a time like this," she replied. "How could I know?" So there was no satisfaction to be had there.

"Mind," said the man on leaving, "you're not to disturb her about anything, or even speak to her. She must not talk. She should not have been brought here, I think, but she would have it. She'd have been more quiet in the hospital. The doctor will be here shortly. The railroad pays all expenses."

"What railroad?" I asked.

"The American, of course," said the man. "Our road, the only road that's got any money. We'll make the Short Line pay it later. If you wait for them, you'll all be dead before they'd do anything."

Here was a fix certainly. I hated mother to be sick, of course, though I don't believe she suffered, because she said nothing. She never made a sound. But sickness would disarrange the house

and make things uncomfortable. Maggie would be kept busy, and the meals would not be properly served. But the worst of it was that I could not get to ask mother about the lamp. Hang it all, was there ever such luck! It was absolutely necessary that I should know where it was, more necessary than mother's comfort, of course, even for her, for without it all the comforts that I had given her could not be guaranteed. Yes, I must ask her. I was just about to go to her room, where Maggie was attending her, when the doctor came.

He brought a nurse with him in his carriage. She soon installed herself and ruled the house. I did not particularly object, for it helped to make the house more lively. She was quite a nice-looking young woman. She dressed in black, with a white cap and apron. She spoke politely to me, went about her work, and gave directions to Maggie. She installed herself at mother's bedside, and kept such guard whenever mother was awake, that I could not get a word with mother without the nurse's knowledge. Of course she would not allow me if she knew of it. One good thing, she relieved Maggie, who could attend to her duties in the kitchen as usual.

The nurse understood her business evidently. In some things she arranged matters better than mother



had done. She did a good deal to reconcile me to the inconvenience.

In one way, which I did not fully appreciate at the time, mother's sickness was the best possible thing which could have happened to me, for it brought Miss Golden. If mother had known that, there is no doubt but that she would have been entirely willing to bear any little pain she may have had for my sake.

As soon as Miss Golden heard that mother was hurt she came at once, insisted on seeing mother, said she was coming every day, and almost took charge entirely. She could not have done more had she been a daughter. She gave the nurse directions, conferred with the doctor, brought flowers and delicacies, and sat with mother frequently. As the representative of her father, whose road was paying all expenses, and in whose employ they both were, the nurse and doctor deferred to her in everything. The visits did not do me any immediate good, for Miss Golden was so employed with mother that I never got the chance of a word with her, hardly a look. But it had the effect of drawing the two families much closer together, which might be to my advantage later.

Mother was real sick, at least they made it out so, for about a month. In all that time I saw her but

seldom. They would not let me speak to her when I did see her. I went in about once a day, if I did not forget it, when mother smiled at me and took my hand. On one of these occasions I wanted to whisper to her to ask what she had done with the lamp, but the nurse was watching. They said that if she was kept right quiet she might soon be better, so I had to bide my time.

In one way the delay did not make much difference, for the supplies came in just as usual, and all extra expenses were borne by the company. As mother got better, Miss Golden, who still came regularly every day, sometimes spoke a few words to me. Then I was not very anxious to have the sickness terminate. If Miss Golden had suspected that I had known of the accident beforehand (though of course I had nothing to do with it personally), she might not have liked it. When I found out how it was that mother came to be on the train I was provoked. Of course she had no business to want to hunt up the lawyers. I had told her not to.

But in another way the absence of the lamp made a great difference. I learned that the accident had caused a great change in the price of the Short Line's stock. It had gone down terribly. For that purpose, the accident could not have happened better. There

was no doubt but the place had been carefully selected by Jinn. He was a knowing rascal. If the same accident had taken place anywhere else, there would have been no great commotion. If there had been any suggestion of design by outside parties, very little would have been thought of it. But as it had injured the wealthy American road, that company had used all the resources in its power to return the compliment. All facts, except such as suited the purpose, were suppressed. A great hue-and-cry was made about everything which reflected on the Short Line. The lawyers, regularly employed by the Great American, were working the case for all it was worth. The great army of employees and people incidentally dependent upon the American company for a living, were set to talking. All helped to affect public opinion. In a short time many holders of Short Line stock, even some who thought it a good safe road, thought best to try to get rid of their holdings, as property of doubtful value, which might not be able to withstand the attacks. The price of the Short Line securities went down rapidly. By the reports in the papers, it could be seen that a number of shares had been changing hands. It was most unfortunate that I could not reap any of the advantages.

If I could only buy, there were now plenty of chances. Before there had been money to pay with, but nothing to buy. Now there were plenty of shares wanting customers, but no money. Of course, while I did not control the lamp, I had no authority over Jinn, and my previous orders were of no account.

After about a month, I was allowed to speak to mother. She was improving, but unable to be up. It was thought that she might be confined to her bed as long as she lived. That would have been very inconvenient for me as well as her. I sincerely hoped it would not turn out so.

I took the first opportunity to question her about the closet. At first her mind seemed dazed and she could not remember. By keeping at her, however, she soon recalled the events just before the accident.

"Why didn't you tell me, mother, that the closet door was open?"

"When did I have a chance, Thomas?"

"Why, mother, you could have told me when I came back to ask you for the money."

"It seems to me, Thomas, you did not give me any chance then. You were in a great hurry."

"But, mother, it couldn't have taken but a moment. You should have remembered it."

“What difference did it make, anyhow? There was nothing of any value in the closet. Why should I think it so important?” asked mother.

“It made all the difference in the world, mother.”

The nurse heard the loud talking, came in and said that I must say no more then.

At the next chance I asked mother again,

“Didn’t you see that old Roman lamp when you were at the closet, the one that used to hang in the parlor?”

“Oh, yes, Thomas, I am sorry you did not take more care of it. When you were done with it, you should have taken it back to the parlor, not thrown it away. Waste not, want not, my boy, no matter how much you’ve got.”

“Thrown it away, mother? Who threw it away?”

“I found it in one corner on the floor of your closet. It was dented up and injured.”

“Well, I didn’t do that, mother. It must have fallen there. Working at the door must have jarred it off the hook. I thought a great deal of that old lamp and wanted to keep it.”

“I’m sorry, then, that I didn’t know it. I gave it away.”

“Gave it away!” I gasped. “Who to?”

## CHAPTER XXX.

## A RAY OF LAMPLIGHT.

THE church charity in which Miss Golden had interested mother was to hold its sale in a public hall. Miss Golden had asked if mother had any old articles around the house, which she would be willing to donate for the sale. Old-fashioned houses like ours very often collected such material without being aware of the fact. Mother could not think of anything at the time, but said she would try to think of something. Just then she found the old lamp. Miss Golden was delighted with it, and said it was a regular antique. She bore it off in triumph.

As soon as I heard this, I was in a great way. Suppose if they should clean it or rub it. Jinn would create a great scandal at a church fair. As soon as I found from mother what hall the sale was to have been held in I was off, determined to buy the lamp back at all hazards.

That would not be an easy task, as I afterwards thought, for neither mother nor I had any very great amount of ready money left from the last allowance, and without the lamp I could get no more. But I should claim the lamp, or get it somehow, even if it were necessary to steal it.

When I got to the hall, I found that the sale had been over two weeks. Who had bought the lamp? That was the question. No one could probably tell me better than Miss Golden. As she did not come so frequently to our house now, I did not wait for her, but went to see her. I now felt well enough acquainted to ask for her, on business at least.

Miss Golden said she had taken a less active part in the sale than she had intended, on account of mother's sickness.

"Do you know anything about that old lamp that mother gave you?"

"Oh, that old lamp? Do you know, we had a great time over that old thing. We thought it was a real antique and had a glass case made on purpose for it. We were going to make lots of money out of it, until a professor came in one night and pronounced the thing a fraud,—only an imitation. After that we kept sponge-cake in the glass case, it was so terribly dirty in the hall, and let the lamp take care of itself."

"What became of it?"

"I'm sure I can't say. I know I tried to sell it after it was taken out of the case. I thought if I didn't just say it was an imitation, somebody might buy it for what it was. I wasn't going to dwell on that point, you know. We wanted to make all we could. It was for a good cause."

"You didn't sell it, then?"

"No, I tried to polish it up one time, but just as I got at it, there was a disturbance in the hall. After that, I don't know what became of it."

"What kind of a disturbance?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing but a drunken man who got into the place somehow, but he did scare me, I can tell you."

"What did he do?"

"He yelled out and screamed. He was a great big working-man. He pushed through the hall and made everybody run. He came up to me and asked me what I wanted. I nearly fainted. He would stand there, so I told some one to tell him I didn't want anything. We pulled the messenger-box for a policeman."

"What became of the man, Miss Golden?"

"After the policeman came, we found he had disappeared somehow."



This narrative interested me, of course, but I was too anxious about the lamp to think of much else.

"Miss Golden, I am particularly concerned about that lamp. It belonged to me and was a keepsake. Mother gave it away without my knowledge, thinking that I did not care for it. Cannot you help me get it back?"

"I am sure," she replied, "that I would if I could. But I do not know what became of it. It was not counted of any value."

"Was it left in the hall?" I asked.

"Not likely. We had to clear everything out of there."

At this point, Miss Golden changed the subject to inquire about mother. She spoke about how patient mother had been all through her suffering. She said that I had a wonderful mother, and that I should be proud of her. Whether it was Miss Golden's words or her manner, I could not say, but somehow she made me look at mother's sickness in a different light. I was really sorry for her, and began to ask myself whether I was to blame. If mother had met her injury through any fault of mine, I determined that I would make it up to her, if only in kindness. Miss Golden had a wonderful power of

affecting people. After Miss Golden ceased speaking, I was silent for a few moments.

I felt that I was overstaying my time. I did not want to go without all the information I could gain on the subject about which I had called. After agreeing with Miss Golden about mother, and I really did, I changed the conversation back again to the lamp.

"But, Miss Golden, would you mind telling me before I go, who had charge of the things that were left in the hall?"

"Mr. Stringer was chairman of the hall committee, and I suppose he looked after the clearing up," she replied.

"Could you not assist me, as a great favor, in getting it from him if he has it? I cannot ask him," I said.

"If it was any one else, I could easily do so, but I cannot ask Mr. Stringer."

"But you know him, and know him well, Miss Golden."

"I know him, of course, but I do not care to ask any favors of him. You know father and he are not friendly."

"But you are friendly, Miss Golden?"

I did not dare to say that I had seen Mr. Stringer visiting at her house frequently.

"Mr. Jackson," said Miss Golden, "do you not presume somewhat in asking such questions about my friends? I do not know that I need answer them."

That, of course, closed the interview. Here was trouble certainly. The lamp was probably in Stringer's possession. I could have no help from Jinn to regain it. If I ever expected to get it again, it must be by my own exertions. If it had not been so valuable, I might have given up the task in disgust. But I could not think how to get it away from Job Stringer.

One thing I did think of. It might be barely possible that he did not have it. Perhaps, if I could find the janitor of the hall, I might hear something of it.

After some difficulty that individual was discovered. He was a young colored fellow, living in the basement of the hall building. I described the missing article, calling it a lamp.

"Didn't see no such thing when I swept out after the show," he declared, in answer to my inquiry.

"Are you sure?"

"Certain sure. No kind of lamp nohow here."

"Look here, John," I said (I had a habit of calling all colored boys John), "if you will find that old lamp, I'll give you something. It isn't very

valuable, at least not to any one but me. It's only worth a few cents for old metal, but I'll pay you liberally. If you will find it for me, I'll give you five dollars."

"And if I don't find it?" asked John. "There ain't much chance. Then I'll be out of pocket for the trouble."

"Well, I'll pay you, anyhow. I tell you what I'll do. If you will look right hard for it, and, if you fail, you afterwards take a message to Mr. Stringer about it—you know Stringer, the man that rented the hall for the fair?"

"Couldn't forget him," said John. "Never had a man want so much in my life. Kept a fellow running day and night and never gave me a copper. If he's got your old lamp, you'll never see it, that's sure."

"But you wouldn't object to take a message to him, to find if he has it? If he hasn't, that settles that, at least if we can believe him."

"Which you can't," said John.

"If he has," I continued, "then I can plan how to get it from him afterwards."

"Well, how much will you pay?" persisted John.

"I'll give you five dollars to hunt and take the message if necessary, and ten dollars if you find the lamp."

"Do you put up any money now?"

"Yes, if you wish it. Here are two dollars to begin."

John and I looked through all the rubbish heaps in the cellar. They were sweepings from the hall for some time back.

"Is this all that has come out of the hall since the sale?" I asked.

"Sakes, no," said John. "If we'd keep everything, there wouldn't be room to live. We feeds the furnace with them."

Here was a new danger. The lamp might be melted up. It was only thin copper, easily fused in a hot furnace fire. It frightened me to think what the consequences might be if the whole syndicate arrangement should be broken up in that way.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## A REGULAR BLAZE.

JOHN and I finally gave up the search in despair. It was hot and dirty work, and I was tired of it. It might be as well to send the note to Stringer. I would do so over my own name. He didn't know who I was. Had never probably seen me or heard of me, though I was his next-door neighbor. He was a busy man. I was interested in him, but not he in me. I had the old grudge against him for wanting Miss Golden's picture, and also for knowing Miss Golden, perhaps, but he didn't know that.

"If you have any water handy, John, I'll wash up and write the note."

"Plenty of wash-water, none to drink," said John.

"What do you drink, then?" I asked.

"I mean no ice-water. We drink hydrant water."

"Well, then, John, I wish you'd let me have some."

I'm all choked up with dirt." John showed me the faucet.

"No glasses here, no nothing. If you want a drink, here's an old tin dipper I use, if it suits you." John brought the dipper and placed it in my hands. The faucet was in a dark corner. As soon as I received the dipper I gave a start. It surely felt like the lamp. I said nothing, pretended to take a drink and then carried it to a lighter spot. It was the lamp, sure enough. It was hard to keep control of myself.

"Where did you get this old dipper, John?"

"Oh, that funny old dipper; why, it's all mashed up. Great big dent in one side." John thought I was finding fault with him for using such a peculiar appliance for drinking. My description of the lamp had not been well understood by him. He did not connect the thing he was hunting with what I held in my hands.

"But where did you get it?" I asked.

"That old dipper?" said John. "Why, that old thing's just been here always. It was born here. It ain't worth shucks anyhow."

"I'll give you ten cents for it," I said. I trembled while I waited for a reply.

"Not without you pay up the rest of the five dollars," said John.

"That's all right," I returned. "I'll have to go to a cleaner place to write the note, but here are the other three dollars, and ten cents for the dipper extra. I'll go home, and when I get the note written, I'll come back and give it to you."

I was anxious to get away with the lamp.

"That's all right," said John. "That's business. You're different from old Stringer."

Though I was so anxious to get away, I could not refrain from examining the lamp at once. It had one bad dent in it, as if from a fall, but otherwise it appeared uninjured, though dirty. The metal was thin, and I thought it might be possible to bend it out again with the fingers. It seemed so easy that I unconsciously put my fingers inside and tried it. The metal came out easily.

"Let me dust it off for you," said John, good-naturedly. He felt good over his five dollars. Before I could prevent him, he took a large chamois skin that he used in cleaning and gave the lamp a tremendous wipe with both hands at once, on both sides, as I held it. John's hand was heavy, being accustomed to hard work.

"No matter," I gasped, as I snatched it away. John must have wondered why I didn't want it cleaned, but he didn't have a chance to say anything,



for just then Jinn appeared and in a tremendous voice began his harangue: "What do you wish?"

John jumped as if he had been shot.

"Get out of this," he yelled.

I echoed his sentiment. "Get out of this, Jinn," I repeated.

"All right, I'll be even with you then, for bringing me here for nothing. I'll——" Jinn was going on very inopportunately.

"You know him?" ejaculated the astonished John.

"Hist!—Get out of here," I said to Jinn. "How should I know him?" I said to John.

"Is there——"

"There is nothing else at present."

Jinn disappeared at once.

"What did you call him?" queried John.

"Oh, I call all colored people John," I explained.

"He's no colored man. He's the same drunken beggar that got in here the other night. I believe he's been sleeping here ever since. I must hunt him."

"Well, I helped scare him for you, anyhow," I said, as I left John and went out with my treasure. I took it home with me, told mother at once that I had recovered it, speaking and feeling very kindly to her, for the remembrance of Miss Golden's words

remained, then took it to my room and called Jinn at once.

He was delayed in getting to me. I heard an animated conversation downstairs between him and Maggie.

"Where in the world have you been with yourself all this long time?" she was asking. "It's been great trouble we've been in since I've laid eyes on ye. It's well ye didn't bother when we was busy. I respect ye for it."

"I've had a day off," said Jinn, "but I don't like it. Steady work and steady pay is my motto."

"Then ye won't strike. That's like me. I'm no fool, though I look it."

"Who said you looked it?" asked Jinn, rather anxiously.

"Wasn't it you now, if I don't mistake?" Maggie replied.

"I never said such a thing in my life. On the contrary, I——"

"Maggie," I interrupted, calling down the stairway, "do let Jinn up to me. I'm in a hurry and have business to attend to."

I apologized to Jinn for my words in the hall cellar, giving my reasons, which appeared satisfactory.

"I suppose, Jinn, that you have done nothing about the Short Line stock."

"Didn't know you had lost the lamp until some one else called me," said Jinn. "We don't keep watch on it like we used to. It isn't necessary with present appliances. If the lamp had been in the hands of any one with any sense, who would have provided proper safeguards, it wouldn't have happened. The boss was down on you, anyhow. It put him in a bad humor. He stopped salaries and put us on piece-work when there was nothing doing. He's better now. Something or other you've done lately appears to have put him in a better humor."

"Where should I keep the lamp, Jinn?"

"In a safe deposit company, of course. That would be the only safe place."

"And have you coming there and making a fool of me?"

"Not at all. Rent a safe. When you want me, take a private room. You can make the arrangement to use one regularly. Call me only in working hours. This would give me a chance to sleep like a Christian at decent times. Of course you want me to be a Christian. I'm no heathen now. If I knew what to expect, that you would want me only in regular hours, it would make all the difference in the world.

I'm getting an old man now, you know. It might make me live another hundred years. The difference would be as great as between when I used to be a slave and when I became an expert. This is the nineteenth century, you know. Give us the benefit of it. We only want justice. Give it, and I'll warrant you'll never be troubled with a strike, not from me, at least.

"If you will do as I want," Jinn continued, "I might even get married and settle down. It's very trying, this life. One never knows what time's his own. Have to be out at all hours of the day and night. No woman would stand it."

"Do you think of getting married, Jinn?" I asked.

"Not exactly," said Jinn, "though there's as fine a woman right in this house as I've seen. She don't appear to object to my nation, or if a man's oldish. I wouldn't dare tell her my age, though. There's go in her. The Irish are a great people. They never get left."

I considered that it would not greatly inconvenience me to agree to Jinn's request, and it would be safer, so gave him the necessary orders.

"But what about the stock, Jinn? You didn't tell me."

"We've just a majority of one share over all other

holders. That's all that is necessary. You won't find the syndicate spending a dollar more than it has to. Now you have a good chance. If you have any brains, you'll take advantage of it."

"But, Jinn, I want advice. I don't pretend that I can work the scheme alone."

"I'm not allowed to give advice on my own responsibility. I can answer a direct question, not always for the best, however. The boss may send advice if he sees fit. He has, several times, to you, but that depends."

"On what, Jinn?"

"If you can't find out, it's no use telling you."

This was not very encouraging, now that I had the power in my hands.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## CHARITY BEGINNING AT HOME.

MISS GOLDEN's words about mother had made a great impression on my mind. I did not forget them very soon. As long as I could get no further information from Jinn about the railway business at present, I remembered to order something before I let him go, which I had vowed I should, just as soon as I got the lamp back.

"Jinn," I said, "what would be a nice thing to give mother to make her feel good? I want something that would be suitable for a person confined to bed, as she is. You might help me with advice on that subject. It was your fault, you know, that she was injured. You would insist on the accident, and you see some people were injured."

"My fault, you dirty blackguard!" yelled Jinn. "What do you mean? It was you ordered the accident. How was I to know you'd go sending your

mother trotting all over town on a wild-geese chase? We know all about it, you ungrateful puppy. If you could gain anything, you'd be only too glad to have your mother killed, if you couldn't gain it any other way."

"Hush, Jinn, you'll disturb her," I said. "I mean that you proposed the accident, and you know I objected at first, until you persuaded me. I own I'm in fault in giving her the wrong directions, and I'm real sorry. I am, truly, Jinn. I wish you'd believe me. I'd almost be willing to give up the Short Line stock, if I could undo mother's injury. I want something to please her."

"If it don't cost you anything," said Jinn, sarcastically.

"No, Jinn, I'm going to spend all my own money on her, whether I want it or not, until she's well again. I was mad at first to think she went, but I believe now she must have wanted that money badly, or she never would have started for the lawyers' after it. She gave me all she had without a word. She did not want to appear ungrateful. I twitted her about it. She wanted to set me a good example. I can see it all now. I don't know what to get her, even with my own money."

"If I could tell you of something that you could

get her, that she would like, and that wouldn't cost anything, you'd prefer that to something that did cost, wouldn't you now, own up?" said Jinn.

"No, Jinn, I really think I should like something better that costs something, and that comes all from me. If you can get me what I want, I will order my allowance stopped until it is paid for."

"Then I'll tell you of something that won't cost you a cent, and that she will appreciate more than anything else: it's kindness."

"That's all well enough, Jinn. I'll try for that, but I want something else too, something that will cost me money. She appears to have everything she really needs."

"There's flowers," said Jinn.

"Miss Golden brings her some sometimes."

"She would think more of yours," Jinn insisted.

"Then, Jinn, bring me some every day, as much as my money will pay for, but they must be nice ones and a little rare fruit. And send her a nice book to look at, or something of that kind, occasionally, something that she would just like, something pleasing and comfortable."

"Ain't you getting beyond your allowance?"

"Then, Jinn, I wish I were richer to do it. Can't you sell some of the Short Line stock to do it?"



"You've only got a majority of one share. If you sell that, you might as well sell all. You can't control the road. That will be the end of Miss Golden, you know. We could sell easy enough. There's no more to be had now. The people are over their scare. The Great American put men out right after the accident to buy up every share they could. There was never a chance before. The American wants to get control of the Rival road. In every case we got ahead of the men and bought the shares. They were awfully provoked. They were all discharged for their failure."

"Well, Jinn, I can't help it. If it can't be done any other way, let the old road slide. Mother must be looked after first. If I gained the money through mother's accident, I'm afraid it won't do me any good."

"Then you're only afraid. That's the reason you want her looked after, for fear you'll lose something yourself."

Jinn had hit the mark. I could not but admit it, and felt quite uncomfortable.

"Jinn," I said, "I am afraid that is the truth. But I really care for mother."

"Because Miss Golden told you. You wouldn't care if you were not afraid of Miss Golden's opinion."

"There may be something in that, Jinn, too. I would like to be worthy of Miss Golden. I want to be like her. She cares for her mother, and I want to care for mine. I will try."

"Well, young one, the boss's orders were, if you took that tack, I was to give you his advice."

"What's that, Jinn?"

"About the Company."

"And you will attend to mother?"

"Yes, that's all right."

"Then go on about the Company."

"The boss says you must be at the election which takes place next Monday. Our shares are all in your name. Here are the certificates. You must vote yourself into the Board of Directors, but you must not take any office in the board. You must not appear in the matter at all. Stringer must remain president. But before you vote for him, you must insist on a certain line of action. He must promise it before the whole board. You must make the same bargain with a majority of the proposed board before you elect them. Show that you can defeat them if they don't agree. They'll come in all right. There must be a policy of active warfare against the Great American, no matter whether the Short Line suffers temporarily or not. If they won't agree, tell them

you will put in a board that will ruin the whole road, injure their stock, and stop their dividends permanently."

"What then, Jinn?"

"There must be a cutting of rates, so that the Great American suffers. They'll be as mad as hops and will vow they will break up our road or get control of it somehow. They can't do either just yet. You must put freight and passenger rates so low that they can't touch them without losing money. Every time they lower, you must go lower yet. You must hire the best lawyers to fight them off on the damage suits caused by the accident, so that they can't get any money from our road, at least for a long time, or without spending a great deal themselves. The lawyers must take advantage of every little thing that occurs to enter suit against the American, bother them all they can."

"But, Jinn, that will make Mr. Golden very angry. He will never get over it. If he finds I have anything to do with the Short Line——"

"He'll be angry, of course, hopping mad, but take my word for it and do as you're told. You don't know railroad people."

"Shall I elect you as one of the board, Jinn?"

"Yes, me and Maggie," said Jinn.

"Do you mean it?"

"No, hardly. That wouldn't do. The boss can work the whole thing through you. Many of the other directors are only figure-heads or tools for somebody else, anyhow. You can't be lonely. Our boss will work it."

The program was carried out as Jinn suggested. Stringer did not give in with any good grace or without a struggle, but he could not help himself.

The immediate consequence of the new policy was that there was a great rush of business on the Rival Short Line. The road might not make much money by it, but as a temporary thing, it was a good advertisement. Long lines of passengers waited at its ticket offices. Parlor-car seats were engaged on all prominent trains for weeks ahead. The American line, to competing points, was deserted. Freight poured in, so that extra men had to be put on to handle it. The rolling-stock, both for passenger and freight business, was not near sufficient. The road was congested with trade and business. After this had continued for some time, Jinn said the orders were for me to see Mr. Golden. "Do not let him know that you have any interest in the Short Line, but hint what you can do with it if he will make it worth while. If you want to make any condition

about Miss Golden, you can do so, if you see a chance, but you had better arrange with Miss Golden herself first. Young ladies nowadays do not always do just as their parents order. Your mother might help you there."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## ADVANCE AND GIVE THE COUNTERSIGN.

It was no use disguising the fact any longer. I was in love with Miss Golden. I was trying to make myself her equal for a purpose. Mother might as well know it first as last, so I told her.

"I have thought as much for some time," said mother, "but you know, of course, there is little hope for you."

"But she likes you, mother. You could influence her."

"I'll do what I can. But you know you are not in position to marry. You have no means suitable for a person of her standing, and you have no regular business. Not only her father but she herself will consider that."

"But I'm going to have a business. You'll see, mother."

To Miss Golden I stated the case thus :

"I am a person of some prospects. I wish to prove to your father that I am a suitable person, and if successful, to ask for your hand. Might I hope, that in case I ever succeed in my expectations, I might be acceptable to you, that is, if your father is satisfied?"

"But you never can be acceptable to him, you know, Mr. Thomas," said Miss Golden, slightly embarrassed, though on the whole, I thought, rather flattered. She had got to know me so well during my mother's sickness that neither of us felt any hesitancy in speaking.

"You do not know father," she continued. "Even if you become very wealthy, you are not a railroad man. Father would prefer Mr. Stringer, much as he hates him, to any one not in that line, because he has shown great ability in railroad matters. That always commands pa's respect."

"And do you like Mr. Stringer?" I asked.

"I have never given him any encouragement," she said.

"He comes here frequently."

"Does he?" she asked. "I am obliged to you for the information."

"I meant to ask you."

"Have you a right to inquire, Mr. Thomas?"

"I hope to have some day, Miss Golden."

"Until then, I cannot tell you. Mr. Stringer is a pushing young man, a man of business, much more likely to succeed in business than you are."

"Then you reject a fellow-photographer for this sharp business man?"

"I did not say so. It's pa that must be satisfied. I will not do anything without his approval."

"Then I shall ask him."

"Do what you see fit."

"Then I give you warning, I am trying for you. If I should ask your father, before I ask you again, you must understand why."

Miss Golden only smiled in answer.

The approach to Mr. Golden's business office was beset with difficulties. As I was not authorized to speak as a person connected with the Rival railroad, and as my own name was unknown, I had considerable trouble to see him. After several attempts and some waiting, the usher admitted me to the office of Mr. Golden's private secretary, who tried to find out what I wanted. I was discreet enough to reserve my remarks for Mr. Golden himself.

"You will have to wait your turn, then," said the secretary.

I waited my turn, but before it came, Mr. Golden's office-hours were over, and he would not see me.



Another day it was the same. Mr. Golden glanced at me once or twice as he passed through, but other people with more important business, who were known to him, were admitted first. They engaged him until too late to see me. This was repeated on several days.

Miss Golden, calling upon my mother, met me at home, after I had made several such attempts. I stated that I wanted to see her father on important business, would she tell me how to reach him.

"If it were not business, you might see father at home in the evenings, but he will not have anything to do with business there. He would be provoked at any one who would attempt it."

From this I knew that Mr. Stringer did not call at Mr. Golden's house on business.

"I could tell you one way to get to see him, if it is very important," she said, roguishly.

"How is that?" I asked.

"The men that get in to see him so easily have a secret password. The secretary has orders not to let them in without it. I know what it is."

"Are you allowed to give it away, Miss Golden?"

"To you, I wouldn't mind. Send in your card to pa himself, and write on it 'I caught Job Stringer napping.'" She would not explain further.

This statement seemed likely. It all went to show how wrapped up railway men were in their business. Even the very password to the president's office was a reminder to "down" a rival organization. Following Miss Golden's advice, when I next called, I wrote the message as directed on my card, and bribed a messenger to hand it to Mr. Golden personally.

The messenger returned and said that Mr. Golden wished to see me at once. This was encouraging. The password was correct. Mr. Golden was ready for me. He had pushed his work aside, and turned from his desk to look me squarely in the face. He did not wait for me to speak.

"So you are the fellow that took my picture in church. I've been wanting to get hold of you for some time. I vowed I'd punch your head the first time I laid eyes on you."

This reception was rather startling, but I soon recovered myself.

"Are you not mistaken?" I said. "I took Mr. Stringer's picture."

"I know all about it, young man. You took mine and changed it for his. My wife told me all about it."

"Have you one of the pictures?" I asked.

"No, but I had one. I've lost it. I've tried everywhere to get another, but haven't succeeded yet."

"Then take my word for it that there are none, or you could easily get one. Job Stringer would have them if there were any around, and he wouldn't keep them to himself."

"There's something in that, young man," said Mr. Golden, somewhat mollified, "but I'll swear to it that the first picture I saw was mine and not Job Stringer's."

"If I could convince you that you were in error?" I asked.

"I should be obliged to you, that's all."

"You will admit that Stringer's picture was good?"

"Capital," said Mr. Golden. "No fault to find there. Fact is, I said it was worth twenty-five dollars to me. If you took it, I'll pay you the money. I sent you my congratulations and said you would make your mark some day. I remember, too, I think I said if you ever wanted a favor to say you caught Job Stringer napping. Why, that's what you wrote, wasn't it?" said Mr. Golden, taking up the card.

"Yes, your daughter told me to."

"My daughter! What have you got to do with my daughter?" Mr. Golden demanded, with some warmth.

"I'm a friend of hers," I asserted boldly.

"I've never seen you in her society," answered Mr. Golden.

"And an enemy of Job Stringer's," I continued.

"You don't look as if you could do him much harm."

"Appearances are sometimes deceptive, Mr. Golden. Would you like to have the upper hand of Mr. Stringer?"

"I'd rather have the control of his road."

"With his road thrown in," I added.

"What do you know about Stringer's road? Sit down, will you?" Mr. Golden got up and closed the office door.

"I know a great deal about it. If I could bring you Stringer's road and make you a present of it——"

"It isn't necessary," said Mr. Golden. "I don't want it. It's heavily mortgaged. No use putting much money in it. All I want is the control."

"If I could get you the control?" I asked.

"I'd give you any place you choose to ask."

"Would you give me the position of a son-in-law?"

Golden hesitated a moment to fully digest the remark.

"Get out of here!" said Mr. Golden.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PRINCESS IS SATISFIED, THE SULTAN IS NOT.

As you may imagine, I did not "get out" at Mr. Golden's suggestion. I did not, however, dare to mention Miss Golden's name again just then, but drew off Golden's attention to railway matters, in connection with the Rival Short Line, in which he was greatly interested. We had not talked very long before he forgot his anger. It was not every day he could come across an apparently friendly person connected with the Short Line.

"If you can do as you say," he remarked, "I suppose you want pay. You must have some motive."

I asserted that I certainly did want pay, and big pay, but I would not name it just then. I would do the work first and talk terms afterwards, when we would be better able to judge of the value of the work proposed.

"You want the presidency of the Rival Line," he said.

"I could have that now if I wanted it. I should prefer Stringer to keep it and be over him, making him do as directed."

"You want a position on this road. You won't make any money out of your stock in that, the way things are being cut," said Golden.

"Don't be too sure of that. The business we have done the past month has been enormous. A nominal position in your company will be sufficient."

We soon came to terms. A definite plan was agreed upon. When I left, Golden was in great good-humor. Then I went straight to Miss Golden. I told her how her password had worked.

"Why, father certainly was in earnest when he gave me the message for you. I should have delivered it before. I thought he would be very agreeable."

"He said your mother had told him."

"Oh, that accounts for it. He knows more than I thought. Well, I beg your pardon," Miss Golden said.

I then explained that I was a railroad man and quite well off; that I was the "boss" of Job Stringer, and that she would soon admit it. Then I went to see mother.

Jinn had done for her more than I had directed. Her flowers were beside her, and were renewed daily. The florists had said that I sent them. She had an elegant book, a picture, a tempting delicacy, or a dainty little present of some kind sent in regularly every day. She thanked me warmly for all my forethought. She truly deserved all that I could give. She looked quite pale as she sat up in bed.

"Miss Golden just thinks you are the most dutiful son she ever heard of," said mother. "I've satisfied her on that score. She has given me her confidence already. If you can satisfy her father, you can satisfy her. She says her father likes Job Stringer because he is successful, though he hates him as a man. Mr. Golden thinks that Stringer's wife will never come to want."

"But, mother, he'll be too stingy to give his wife anything, no matter how wealthy he is."

"There's something in that. I'll try to impress that on her," said mother. "She thinks that any one who has made a good son will make a good husband. No woman need be afraid that she will ever suffer if her husband has been attentive to his mother."

"But, mother, what can I give her for a present that she will like?"

"She does not need presents, my son. Her father is the one to be looked after, but you could not get any present suitable for him."

"Don't be too sure of that, either, mother. I'm not so insignificant as I seem."

"There's one thing I heard Miss Golden express a wish for. If you only had money enough, I think she would like it. She can't persuade her father to get her one, but if she received one as a gift, from a person able to give it, I do not think her parents would object to her keeping it."

"What's that, mother?"

"She envies you your bicycle. She has seen you on it frequently."

"That would be splendid, mother, if I could give her one. And it would give me such advantage. I should probably get chances to ride with her."

"She would just love to ride with you. She wants to learn."

"I shall teach her, mother."

This was easily arranged. Jinn soon had a beautiful ladies' wheel sent up with my compliments. I made an arrangement to store it where mine was kept, in a similar case, and also hired the use of an upper floor for teaching. Miss Golden was delighted, though she hesitated about taking the wheel from



me, for several reasons. Her mother finally gave her permission. She was glad for her daughter to have the chance to ride, as she needed the exercise. Her father did not object. It did not take me long to teach her how to manage it, and then we had some lovely rides out-of-doors. We became very intimate. I could not, however, as yet, be properly received at her house, until her father and mother were satisfied of my social standing and means.

It was not very long before the railroad war ceased. The rates on the Short Line returned to what was normal, and on the Great American also. When I again wanted to see Mr. Golden, I had no difficulty in reaching him. He was well pleased. He understood that I had stopped the war according to agreement.

"Mr. Golden," I said, "I have come to make you a business offer. You can accept it or reject it as you see fit. If you reject it, do not bear me any malice, for the offer is not a bad one for you."

"I will hear it before making any promises," said Mr. Golden.

"I have here," I continued, producing a large envelope, "the certificates of a majority of shares of the Rival Short Line Railway. There is only a majority of one share, but it gives full control. Be-

sides, the opposition is not concentrated. These shares belong to me, and stand in my name on the books of the company, of which company I am now a director. I have signed them all over to you in blank, ready for transfer, if you so direct. As soon as they pass from my possession I will have to resign my directorship, but can make terms as to who shall be my successor. He will be elected by the board for the rest of the year. I have already the written promise of the majority of the board that if I resign they will vote for whoever I nominate. At the end of the year these shares control the annual election. Through my management the road has lately made a large sum of money, notwithstanding the big cut in rates. The business was so great that the cut was advantageous. On that account the directors are willing to follow my advice, at least for the present. My successor shall be whoever you say. You know the value of these shares in money. They are no longer below par, as they were immediately after the accident. They cannot be purchased. I need not remind you what the advantages of controlling the road would be to you. I only make one condition. I ask but one favor in return."

"Name it," said the delighted Mr. Golden. "It shall be granted."

"The hand of your daughter in marriage. I am confident that she will not object."

"You want to pauperize yourself to become my son-in-law? That's not business. Job Stringer would not have made that offer, and Miss Golden would make a mistake to take you on such terms."

"But if I should have other resources?" I asked.

"You will have to show them."

Mr. Golden evidently wanted the Short Line if he could have it without me.

"You will besides have to show that you are her social equal. You would have to prove to me that you could provide for her as she has been provided for. You would have to have a suitable residence, at least as fine as the one she now lives in."

"Then you refuse the offer."

"Let me see the certificates."

I showed them to him. He considered quite a while.

"How much money will you take for these without Miss Golden?" he asked.

"They are not for sale," I replied.

"Then I cannot sell my daughter. I can break up the Rival road, anyhow. These will soon be worth no more than plain pieces of paper."

"If I can comply with your conditions, would you take them?" I asked.

"Comply first and ask afterwards," he said.

"Jinn," I said, when I had gone to the bank and summoned him, "can't you make a special effort and get me up a nice house, that would satisfy Mr. Golden?"

"And you give away the railroad and have nothing to live on after all we've done?" asked Jinn.

"It may be necessary, Jinn."

"Nonsense. Work your game differently. He'll think more of you if you hold on to the stock. Show him that you're powerful and make him afraid of you. Make him want to conciliate."

By Jinn's advice, the railway war began again, harder than ever. It soon became evident that the Great American was losing money. Its stockholders were at Mr. Golden, urging him to conciliate, before the big road had to go into bankruptcy.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SULTAN IS SATISFIED, THE PRINCESS IS NOT.

"WHAT kind of a house do you want?" asked Jinn, after he had given me the advice, which again renewed the railroad war.

"I want a fine house, a very fine house. Better than Mr. Golden's. It must be built quickly, be large, and have every modern improvement. It must be on a fine street. If I keep the stock, the income of that will be sufficient to run the house."

"We have built houses rather rapidly at times, when necessary; fine ones too. We contract to work as many men as possible; put the bricklayers, for instance, as thick as they can stand. As fast as they run up the walls, carpenters and plasterers are at work inside. We use patent plaster that dries at once. In this way we have built quite a respectable house in a day, on a wager. It costs a little more for the speed, that's all."

"How about a fine house, Jinn? How long would that take?"

"We can follow modern methods, use an iron frame that can be made quickly at several mills, and put together as fast as need be, according to how many men we work at once. Nowadays house-building is like putting together a toy-house. We used to think we worked quick, but we couldn't hold a candle to what we can do now."

"Well, Jinn, I leave it to you."

"Is there anything else to-day?" asked Jinn.

"Yes, everything. Put it in the house, Jinn. Don't omit anything. I'll give you an omnibus order. Just hump yourself and surpass all former efforts."

In that way it came about that when Mr. Golden awoke one morning, not very long after, he saw over the trees of the public park, on which his house faced, the top of an imposing edifice, in the place where there had formerly been quite a fine residence, but one not near so elegant. He thought it strange that he had not heard of any such proposed change before.

Calling a servant, he inquired about it, and sent out to ascertain all particulars.

"It's Mr. Thomas Jackson's new residence," he was informed.

"Who in the mischief is Mr. Thomas Jackson, I wonder," remarked Mr. Golden. "Well, I'll be hanged. Mr. Jackson is the Short Line fellow."

The renewal of the railroad war had somewhat changed Mr. Golden's opinion. He did not exactly like having let his chance slip, particularly as his stockholders were complaining. He had since wished that I had been a suitable person for his daughter, so that he might have accepted my offer. When he heard of the house, he began to think there might be something in me after all.

They talked the house over at Mr. Golden's breakfast-table.

"It must have gone up like a flash. I never heard of it before," Mr. Golden remarked. "Daughter, that must be your residence that's building."

Miss Golden blushed and left the table.

That morning, the house being nearly completed, I waited upon Mr. Golden.

"So you are going to move into our neighborhood, are you, friend Jackson?" was Mr. Golden's first remark. "I congratulate you. Now I suppose you want me to accept your terms."

"On the contrary," I said, "I have come to give you notice that I formally withdraw the offer I made you."

"What!" he ejaculated. "You don't want Miss Golden?"

"I want her more than ever," I replied, "but I do not propose to buy her. You probably know what harm the Short Line can do you. We propose to keep on and 'bust' you, unless you make terms with us."

"And you want to keep the stock?"

"I certainly do."

"Young man, your head's level. What terms do you want?"

I stated them briefly. I would make certain business contracts which would virtually give the American the control of the Rival Line, on the payment to me of certain money and the offer of a certain position. I also strongly hinted that it might be well to cement the agreement by a family alliance through his daughter.

"Now you're talking business," he said. "On that tack you'll succeed. Go see what Miss Golden says."

You may be sure that I lost no time in approaching Miss Golden. I felt much more at ease with her by this time, so that it was not at all difficult to open the subject again. I persuaded her to go with me and examine the house.



It was an elegant affair, far outshining her father's residence. The house was being furnished most luxuriantly. I pointed out all the added comforts she would have, what a standing in society it would give her. I showed her what this room could be used for, and what that. She would be mistress of all of it and could do as she liked.

"After we have had so many rides together," I continued, "I flatter myself that I am not disagreeable to you, at least as much so as Job Stringer."

"Indeed?" she queried. "You must judge only for yourself. But which is your mother's room?"

"Oh, mother will do all right. She can stay in the old house."

"Alone?" asked Miss Golden.

"With the servant, of course. We can go to her whenever you like."

"Won't she be lonely?"

"She'll get used to it. All mothers have to. There is a time you know when you must forsake father and mother and cling unto your wife. If you prefer, mother can live with us. Most wives don't like mothers-in-law."

"She would enjoy that, and I am sure you would. I should like it, too, I think. She is like a real mother to me," replied Miss Golden.

"Let it be so, then," I said.

"If I should consent, Mr. Thomas, and your mother should live with us, you know it does often lead to trouble to have a mother-in-law in the house. If a question between us should come up, which side would you take? Would you prefer me to your mother?"

"Why, of course," I replied, quickly. "Mothers must always take a back seat in a daughter-in-law's house. She's good enough in her way, but of course I should prefer you. I think too much of you to let mother interfere. You need not be afraid of that."

"I only asked for information," she answered, "but I think you will have to excuse me. The house is very nice indeed, but the fact is, Mr. Stringer asked me last evening if I would not marry him."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ALL HANDS SATISFIED.

"It's all your fault," I said to Jinn. "Now I've got all this railroad and a big house on my hands and don't know what to do with it."

"It's worth money, ain't it?" said Jinn. "You can sell it."

"It's too much trouble to bother with it."

The fact is that without Miss Golden I dropped back into my old habits and did not want to take any trouble. I found that she had been keeping me up to everything that I had been doing.

"It's all your own blundering, you know," Jinn informed me, "but as you've been doing well lately, Boss said I might tell you."

"I'm obliged for the information," I growled.

"Then you don't want to take advantage of it?"

"What advantage could I take, Jinn?"

"Undo your mistake, Old Fraud," he replied.

"How could I do that?"

"Why, you blundering old ass, can't you see that you put your foot in it? Don't you see that if you had said you preferred your mother, while you had no one else but your mother, she would have felt more secure that you would have preferred her, when she stood in your mother's place."

"Do you think she really cares for me?"

"I do," said Jinn.

"How can I remedy it now, Jinn?"

"Leave it to your mother."

Mother, though she was bedridden still, had more power and influence than I gave her credit for. She sent for Miss Golden, who came at once. After they had a talk, mother sent for me. She put my hand in Miss Golden's, who looked up and blushed.

"I care for mother, of course," I said. "I care for both of you. With your advice I do not think I could ever ill-treat mother. Won't you help me try?"

"That is spoken more like a dutiful son," Miss Golden answered. "I have always said I would marry no other kind. I have always admired such men. If you had not shown such traits, I should never have cared for you at all."

"You do care for me, then?"

Miss Golden hung her head, but I inferred that meant yes.

So it was all arranged. Mr. Golden was satisfied, Mrs. Golden was satisfied, mother was satisfied, Miss Golden was satisfied, and I was satisfied. Two other people were more than satisfied, Maggie and Jinn. By an arrangement with the latter, who had planned certain apartments in the house to suit his ideas, I was to allow him to retire from active service and settle down. He was to try to resign from the syndicate, but, to insure his comfort, I was to place the lamp where it could not possibly be used for all time to come.

Miss Golden and I were married, and we all moved into the elegant house, mother, Maggie, and all.

Maggie was married to my coachman, Jinn, and they lived in the apartments which he had planned over the carriage-house. I have often been asked why I kept such an uncouth coachman, who never would wear livery and was always so rough-spoken and disagreeable to strangers. You will now understand why. I can always keep him in order, for he is afraid that if he don't behave, I will get the lamp again, when he will have to return to work and leave Maggie.

Jinn laughs at me when I make such a remark, and

says that I can't undo what I have done, that I couldn't get the lamp again if I tried. But I can see that he is secretly fearful lest I may.

The syndicate, of course, was down on me for ruining their business; at least, I took that for granted. I have never been able to find who composed the syndicate. I infer that certain opposition to the management of the Great American Railway System, which crops out at each annual meeting, but which never does any harm, comes from that source. I would not know how else to account for it.

The best thing was that, under my wife's kind care, mother fully recovered, so that I was relieved of the thought that she was injured permanently through any fault of mine.

After I married, my income from the Rival railroad, with that from the money received from Mr. Golden under the agreement, together with my salary as an officer of his company, made me independently wealthy. I did not disturb Stringer. It was satisfaction enough for me to have him know that I married Miss Golden. But he had to do as I directed. I gradually transferred some of my holdings in the Rival road to persons connected with the Great American, and bought American securities instead, in which latter company I also invested a great deal

of extra money which was not needed for ordinary expenses. In this way, it is not surprising that when Mr. Golden died some years afterwards, I succeeded to his position, which I still hold, that of president of the Great American Railway System.

You have now seen how I reached this position, by exceptional means, it is true, but you can still learn a lesson from my life. Follow me in everything which I have shown assisted to the end, in gaining the highest point in any profession you may have selected (in anything but trying to become a railway president: there is no room there), but do not depend on getting the great help I had. That being the case, you will need an education. You cannot get along without it as I did. Of course all who follow my advice, and leave railroad presidenting alone, will want the next best thing, to be President of the United States, but even then an education is of some service. Should you be so unfortunate as to fail of that, and be obliged to aim as low as Secretary of State, an education is even more desirable.

You wish to know what became of the lamp,—where it is now. I will tell you. The story shall not be left incomplete this time.

If you ever go to London in England, don't fail to visit the British Museum. In the gallery where are

displayed Roman antiquities, you will find a case devoted to just such lamps. Among them is mine, which I donated to that institution because it was the safest place to keep it. It is Number —, but I had better not tell you just which lamp it is.

The Museum people were not sure that it was Roman, but they gave it the benefit of the doubt until they could agree. They have never been able to do so yet.

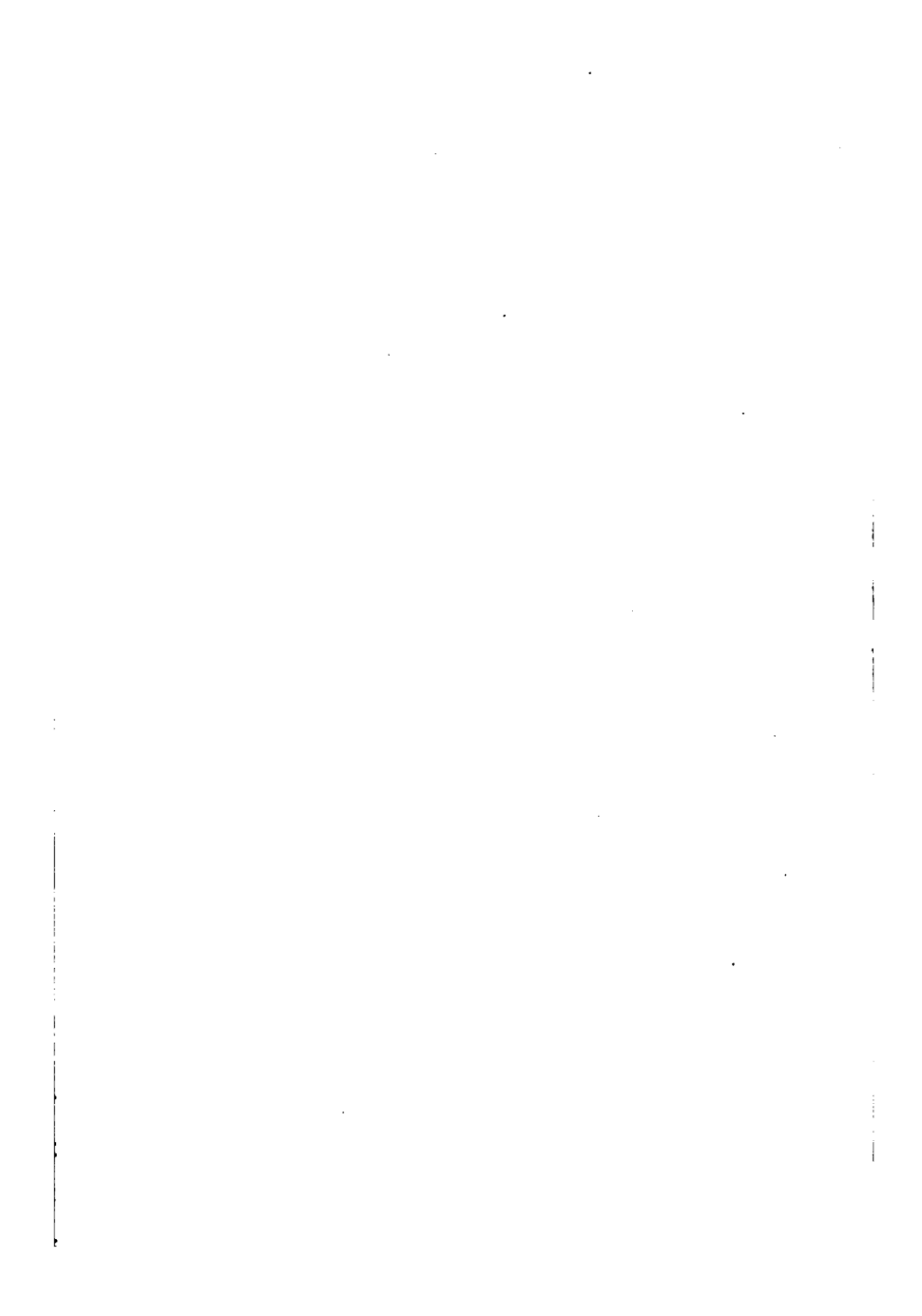
This great institution has fireproof buildings, is well guarded, and the curiosities are all under glass, so that no one can ever touch them. You can look at them all you want. Artists and designers go there to copy them, resting their drawing-paper on the glass, but to get permission to handle them would be an impossibility. To do that, you would have to make an application, stating why you wanted this privilege, what you were going to do after you got it, what your previous life had been, what your occupation, where you had lived at every moment of your life, where all your near and distant relatives had lived, what they were doing or going to do, the name of every person you had ever spoken to in your life in the whole world (if you cannot remember any one, your application will be rejected at once), and you will be required to give a lot of other material infor-



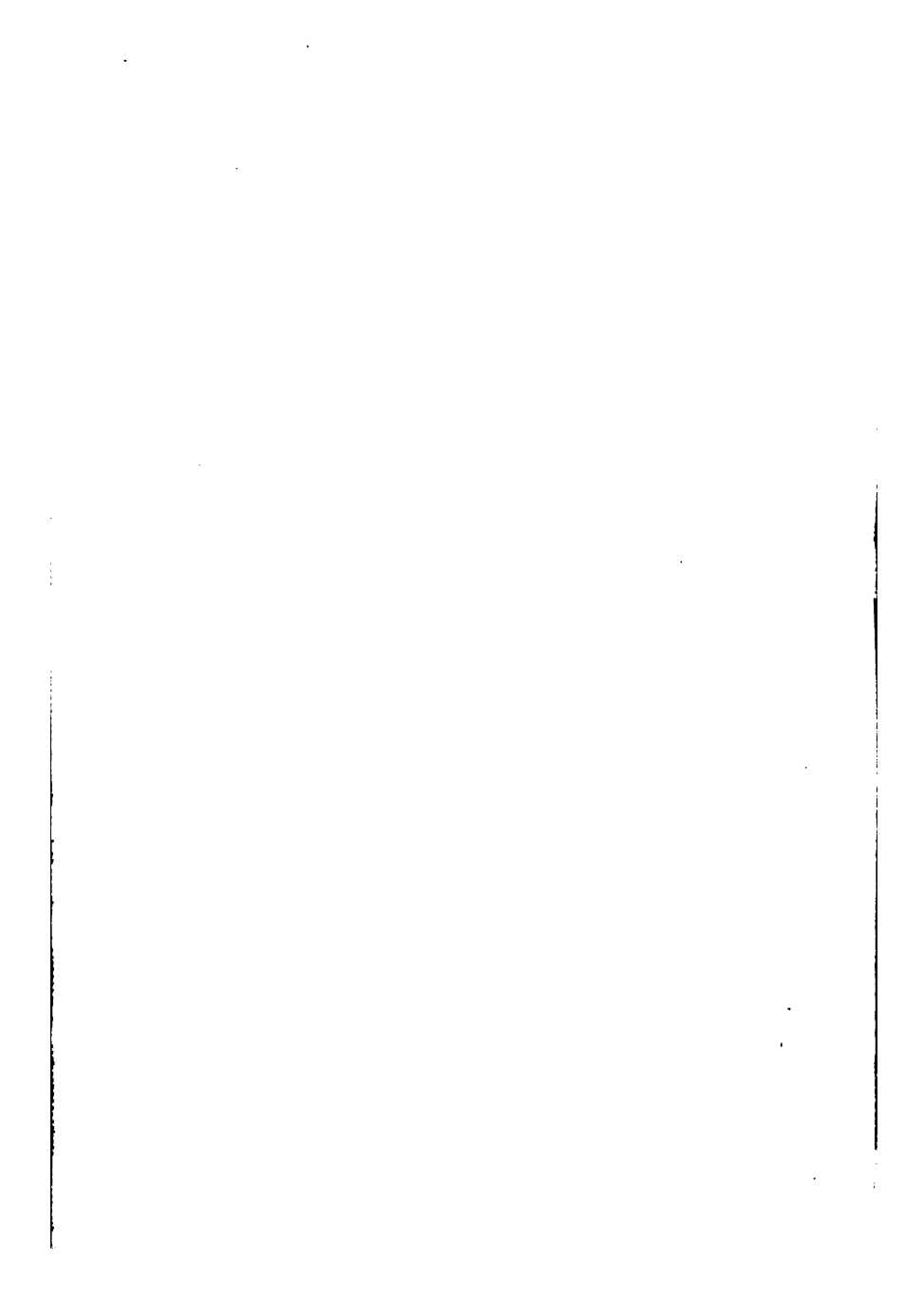
mation. This all has to go before the Governor of the Museum, from him to the Committee, from the Committee to the Board, from the Board to the Commissioner, from the Commissioner to the Queen. If the Queen is favorable, she says yes, on condition that you will furnish her with further particulars. Then the application has to come down the line again, and go up the line again to the Queen, after which it takes several other trips. The time required, even if the request is finally granted, which is not likely, is more than the usual length of a man's life, even if he makes the first request when he is a baby, so that there is not much chance that the lamp will be disturbed. If the English Government is ever overthrown, then you may hear of it. I may add that you cannot trace up my connection with the matter, as the catalogue does not say "Donated by Thomas Jackson, Esq." I entered the lamp under an assumed name which I have forgotten. My wife never heard of the lamp, and I don't want to go into explanations, so that is the end of it.

THE END.

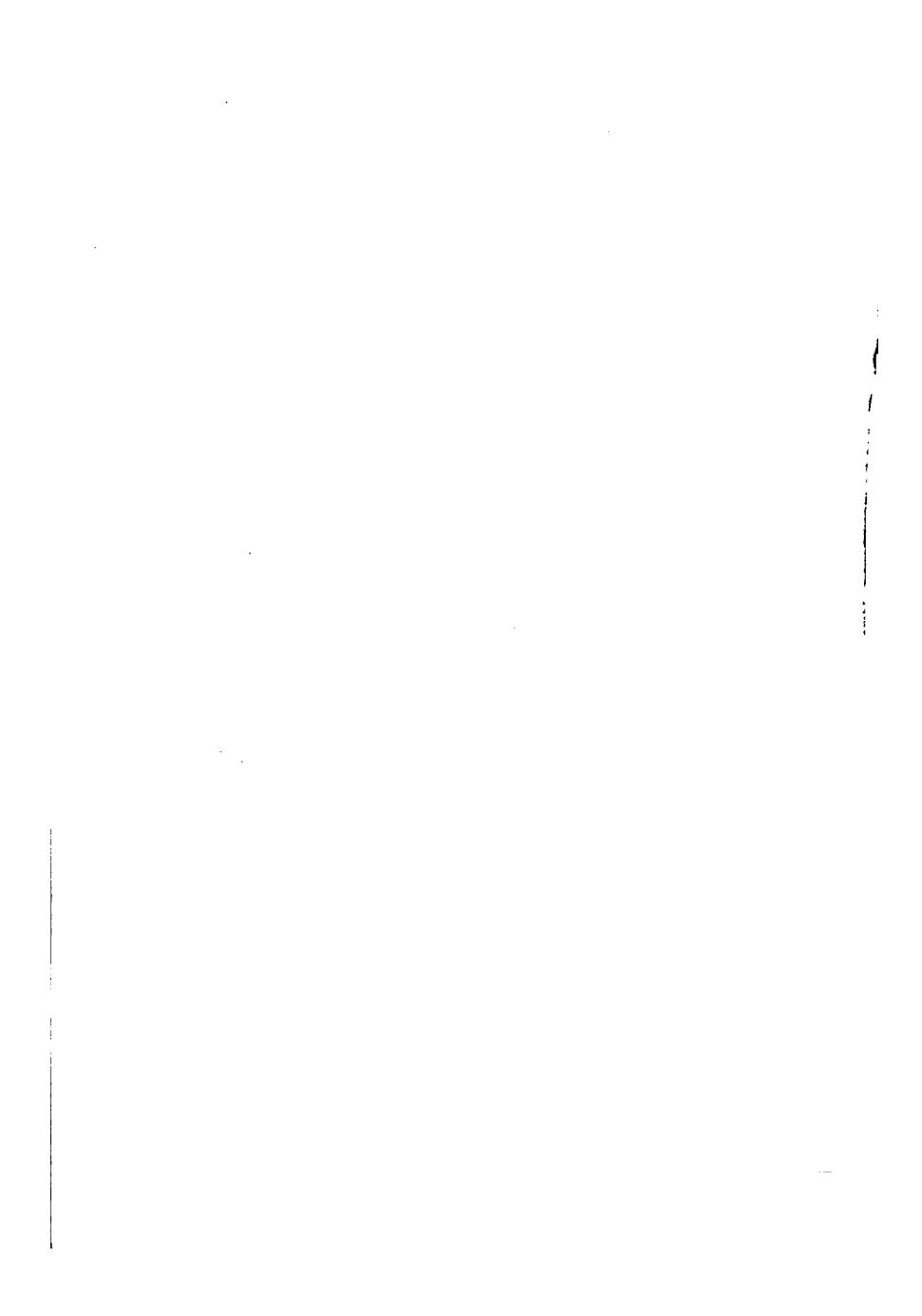


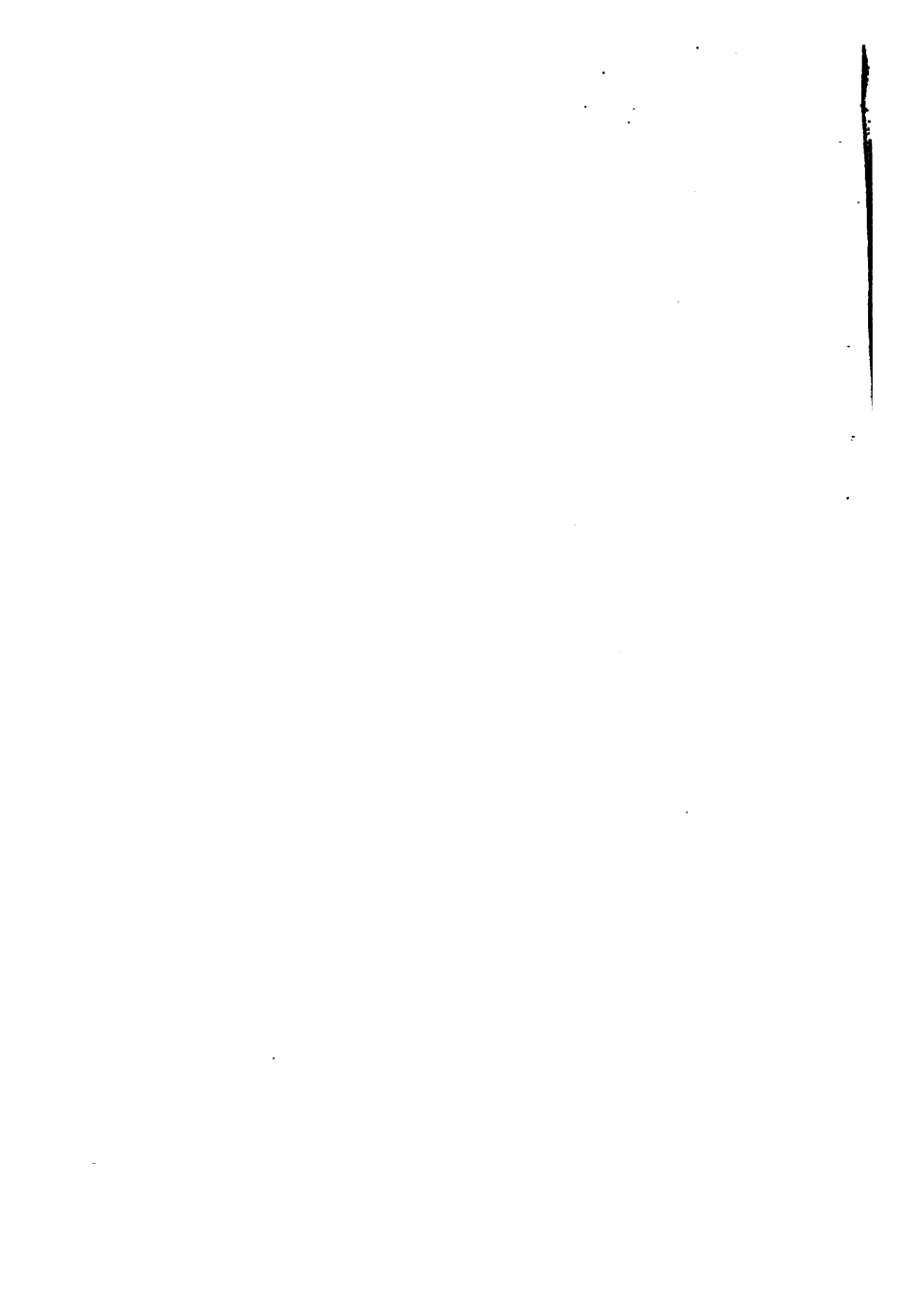


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